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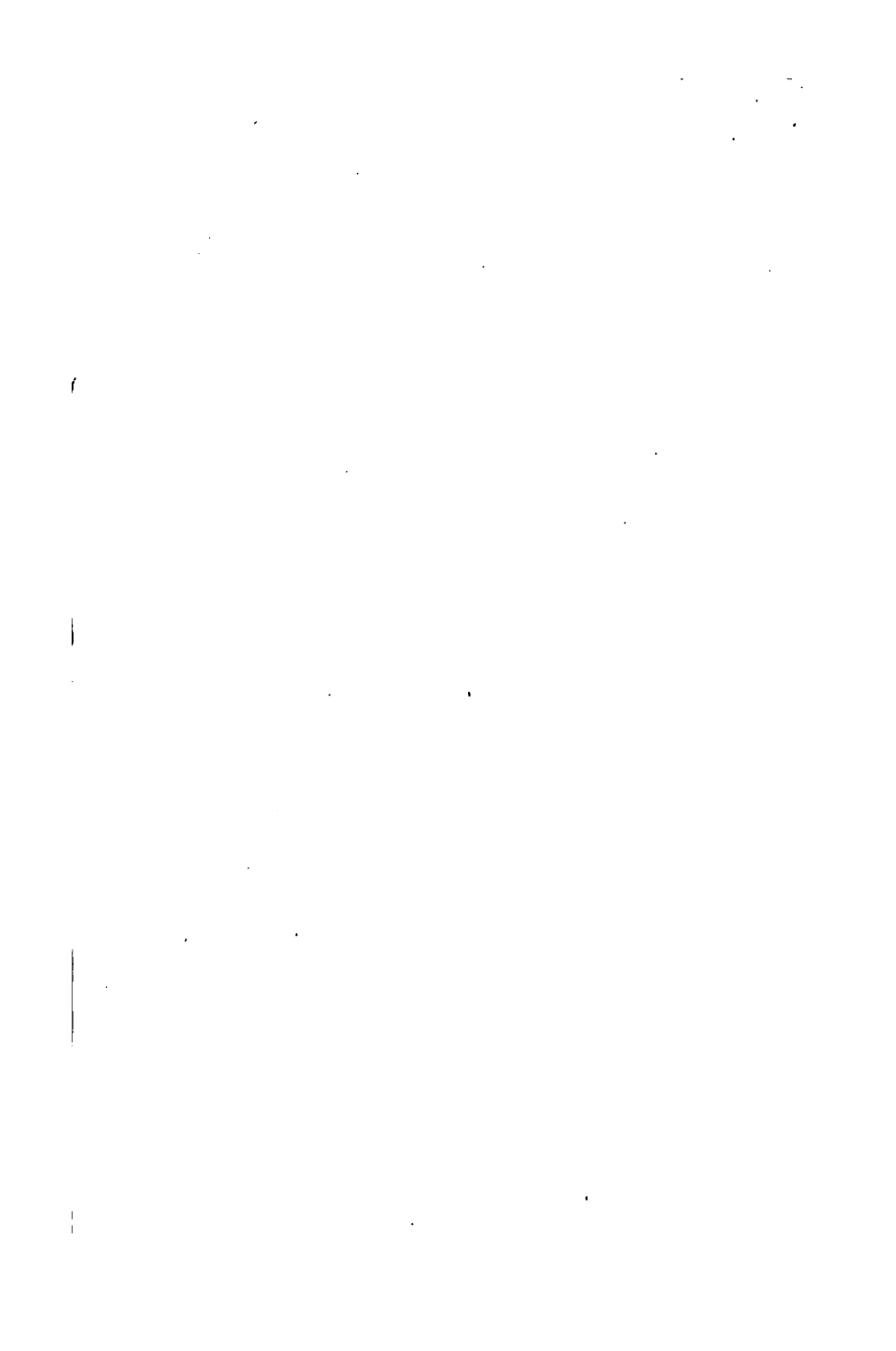




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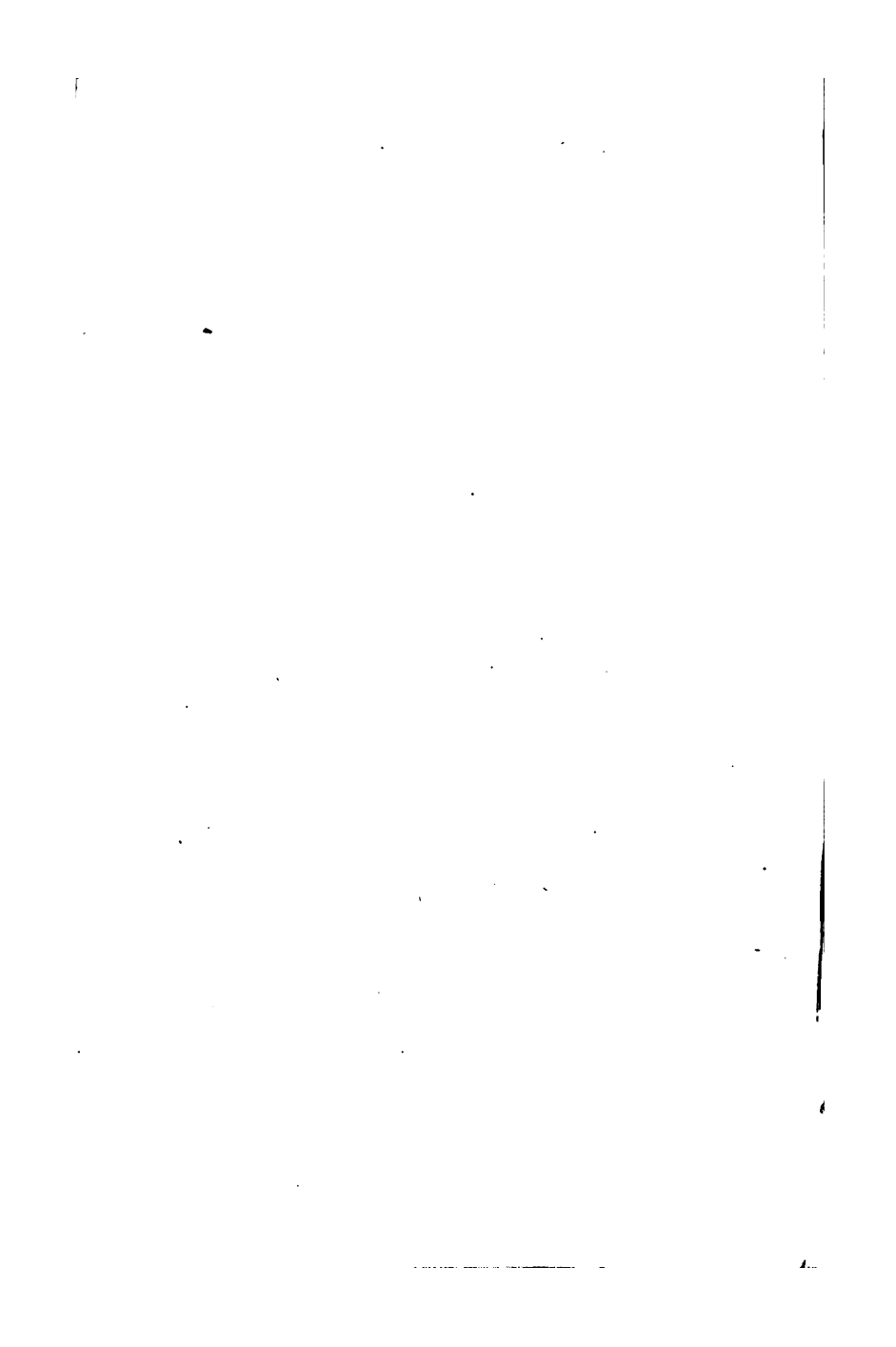
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SCRIPTURE LESSONS

FOR THE UNLEARNED.



SCRIPTURE LESSONS
FOR THE UNLEARNED,

TO BE

READ WITH THE BIBLE.

BY M. E. S.

AUTHOR OF "PLOUGHING AND SOWING."

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PREFACE.

THE "Old Testament History for the Young and the Unlearned, by a Country Clergyman," published by the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," is a very excellent little book. Nothing can be more admirable as an introduction to the study of Scripture for those who are only learning to read: but the full-grown among the unlearned will not, or ought not, to be long satisfied with such knowledge of Scripture as can be gained by such easy reading; for the Inspired Word has a power of its own, which not even the very best of such simple explanatory versions of Bible Stories can at all compete with.

He who has had very little schooling, will often cling to his Bible, rightly judging that he will find there far more both of interest and profit than in the very best of the little books written to tell him what it is about; yet many and great are his difficulties, and large indeed will be the proportion of Scripture which he will altogether lose, and he will often—often—put a wrong meaning on what he fails to understand.

In short, he wants help; and it is hard to say where he is to find it. In these days of many books, scanty indeed is the supply of such lore, or indeed of any lore, suited for the unlearned who are no longer children. I gave up the search in despair, and was driven to writing Lessons for them, and even to printing a few copies at home, at the cost of much time and labour, as the only thing to be done. These Lessons I am now very thankful to be able to publish, rather as experimental specimens than as at all supplying the need—as great as ever—for more and better of a similar kind.

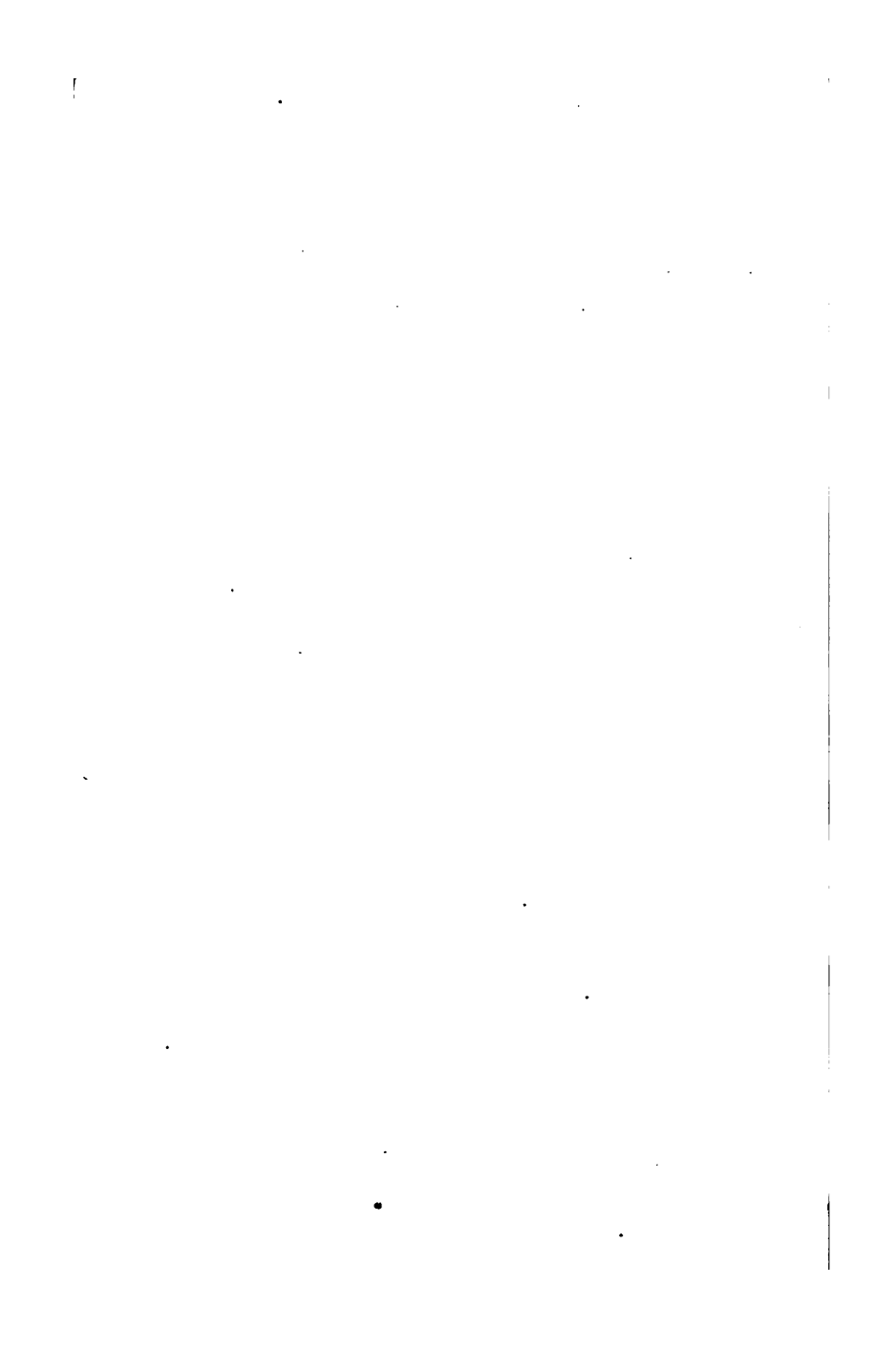
The only book of the kind I know of (perhaps the most valuable book ever written for working people) is Mrs. Trimmer's "Help to the Unlearned in the Study of Scripture," till lately on the catalogue of the "Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge," but now, alas! no longer to be found there. It is a short, simple, explanatory comment on every chapter in the Bible, in two volumes; but even this was found not simple enough for those my little Lessons were written for—average farm-lads, some verging on twenty, and some even older, but all very ignorant.

The Lessons were first used as an accompaniment to the Old Testament part of weekly Bible readings for a year, as there was a yearly change of scholars. It was found that, though they understood what was told them at the time, they very soon forgot a great

deal of it, unless they could take the Lessons home to read over in the week. For this purpose some were printed on separate sheets ; but bound copies have also been much valued by some to whom they have been given.

Indeed, one inexperienced youth, to whom a *written* copy had been given, now writes three years after, (not knowing of the little private edition :) "I am going to have that book printed which you wrote, as my father and mother says they should like to have it in print ;" so the time for publishing it seems to have come.

Some short notes, made by a clergyman to help his sisters in Sunday-school teaching, have been of much use to the writer of these Lessons.



SCRIPTURE LESSONS FOR THE UNLEARNED.

LESSON I.

BOOKS OF THE OLD TESTAMENT.

HISTORY.

Genesis
Exodus
Leviticus
Numbers
Deuteronomy
Joshua
Judges
Ruth
I. Samuel
II. Samuel
I. Kings
II. Kings
I. Chronicles
II. Chronicles
Ezra
Nehemiah
Esther

Job
Psalms
Proverbs
Ecclesiastes
Song of Solomon

PROPHECY.

Isaiah
Jeremiah
Lamentations
Ezekiel
Daniel
Hosea
Joel
Amos
Obadiah
Jonah
Micah
Nahum
Habakkuk
Zephaniah
Haggai
Zechariah
Malachi

The Bible is the whole book of God's Word, which is in two parts—the Old Testament, and the New Testament.

People often call the first part by itself "The Bible," instead of calling it "The Old Testament;" but that is not a right way of speaking.

The Old Testament is part HISTORY and part PROPHECY. History means what tells of things that are past. Prophecy foretells things to come.

In Bible History we are shown how God orders the world, which in reading other history we can only understand in as far as our knowledge of the Bible helps us to do so. It shows us things that would be quite hidden from men, if God had not revealed or made them known by His Holy Spirit.

Bible History ends with the book of Esther.

The next five books are of different kinds, none of them all history nor all prophecy.

Prophecy begins with the book of Isaiah, and goes on to the end of the Old Testament. This wonderful power of prophecy was given by the Spirit of God to the writers of these books, who spoke of things in the life of Christ on earth, many hundreds of years before He was born, as if they saw them—and everything that they said came to pass, exactly as had been foretold.

The Old Testament all the way through is promising man a Saviour, who should save

him from being the devil's servant here, and the devil's slave for ever in hell: save him from sin in this life, and the punishment of sin for ever in the next.

Now if it is the New Testament that teaches us how Jesus Christ, by dying for us, has saved from sin and eternal death all who are willing He should save them, and without believing this we cannot be saved; some may think that surely the New Testament is all we need.

We might think so, till the Bible itself taught us better; but God is wiser than man, and He has given us the Old Testament as well as the New Testament; and the Old Testament is put at the beginning, which seems to show us we ought to read it first: or at any rate, the way our Bibles are put together, should show us that God did not mean that we should read one part only, and think that enough, but that He would have us go on studying it constantly, first one part and then another, for one part helps us to understand another.

The Old Testament foreshows the New, and leads us on to it: and then the New Testament sends us back again to the Old; for we find there is a great deal we cannot rightly understand unless we know the Old Testament pretty well.

We cannot rightly believe on Christ, unless we understand our need of a Saviour, and

the Old Testament shows us that. It tells us how sin came into the world, and we all deserve God's anger, and what great cause He has for anger against us.

In the Old Testament we see how often men provoked God by withstanding His righteous will; and if God's Holy Spirit enlighten us to know ourselves, we see in how many ways we have sinned like them, and provoked God; then we understand how great has been God's mercy in bearing with us so long, and still giving us time for repentance, and promises of pardon and peace, through Jesus Christ.

LESSON II.

ON PRAYER AND THE GRACE OF GOD.

CAN we have anyone for a friend whom we will never speak to?

Then, shall we know God, or have Him for our friend, if we never speak to Him in prayer?

I do not say that God never speaks to the hearts of those who never pray; for He is so loving and merciful, that He goes on speaking to us, by His Word and by His good Spirit; but if we will not pray, God will leave off speaking to us; for He has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man"

Even when we hear His Word, it will not speak to us: we may understand it with our heads; but it will not speak to our hearts.

If we love a father or master on earth, are we not glad to do all he would have us do? and if we even have to give up something we like to please him, does it not make us happier than pleasing ourselves? Much more shall we feel this, if it is God that we love and serve. He is a better friend than any friend on earth ever can be. He asks nothing of us but what is for our good; and He says, "Whoso offereth Me thanks and praise, he honoureth Me; and to him that ordereth his *conversation* aright, will I show the salvation of God." (Conversation here means way of life.)

But some men do not wish to turn from sin, and so had rather keep away from God.

How can such men be saved, unless they repent? If we will not taste and see how gracious the Lord is, we shall never know it, and shall be cast out of God's presence for ever, though Jesus Christ has died to save us.

It is told us as a mark of those who do not belong to God, that "they call not upon the Lord."

When we speak of a man having God's *grace*, we mean that his sins are pardoned, and he is in favour with God: but we mean something more as well. At first grace meant pardon and favour, and nothing more; but as more always goes along with it, it soon got

to mean all that men have in their hearts, who are living in the favour or grace of God : first, hatred of sin that God hates, and then more and more of the happy feelings and temper of mind that are the fruits of the Spirit—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

And who are they who have this grace?

We learn from the Bible, all who have true faith in Christ. It is this that overcometh the world, that makes men strong to stand against temptation, to bear scorn, shame, or ill-usage, and be ready to give up all in this world, even life itself, for Christ's sake.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith;"—faith in Christ, and in all that he has done for us ; so let us think of what that is, that we may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.

To have true faith in Christ is to believe that Jesus Christ bore on the Cross the punishment of all our sins for us, so that for His sake God already looks on us as His children, and if we will only come to Him as to a Father, will show us that He does so, by hearing and answering our prayers, and giving us the help of His Holy Spirit, that we may be able to love and serve Him, and to stand firm against the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil ; for Jesus Christ came with a message of love and mercy to all, if they will turn from sin, and serve God.

to save men another way ; not by the Law, but by grace, through faith in Christ. But as we only find out what we cannot do, by trying to do it, we must try to keep God's Law, and to do what is right, before we can feel what sinners we are, or rightly know and believe in Christ's great love in dying for us.

When we find we cannot make our own peace with God, or save ourselves, we feel our need of a Sayiour ; so we are told, "The law is our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ."

Jesus Christ showed in His life in what way a man ought to do the will of God, do His will on earth, as it is done in Heaven.

He lived only to do the will of God. He said, "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O my God ; I am content to do it, yea, Thy Law is within My heart." His perfect love for God was shown by His perfect love for man.

His whole life was spent in doing good, often to those that hated Him. This was the mind of Christ ; and we are told, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

But how can we hope to have the mind of Christ, when all our lives long, we have been breaking God's laws, and sinning against Him ?

We could have no hope at all of this grace of God, if Jesus Christ had not done yet more than set us an example. He bore our punishment for us, to make our peace with God.

Believing this, we shall feel that we too can love God as our Father, for Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren.

So through Him, for His sake, and His goodness, (not our own,) we may come to God.

Believing this, we shall love God as our Father, and come to Him as to a father, to ask Him for all we need, both for our souls and bodies.

LESSON IV.

THE CREATION OF THE WORLD.

Read Genesis, iii. verses 1 to 5.

To create means to make things out of nothing, which only God can do.

He made the world and all things in it by His word. Man was the last and greatest of God's works—for him everything was made.

In the first chapter of the Bible we see how day by day the world was made more fit for the abode of man.

At first, we are told, it was "without form," (there was nothing in it that had any shape or form,) "and void," (that is empty,) "and darkness was over the face of the deep,"—everywhere a dark empty sea, and nothing else—no living creature, even in the sea.

How could men have lived an hour in a world like that?

And God said, "Let there be light:" and from that time day and night began. What a change at once was this!

Read verses 6 to 8.

The second day God made the firmament, (or sky,) to divide the waters above (that is, the clouds) from the waters below, (that is, the sea.) Till then the clouds had lain on the sea like a thick mist, so that, though the light was made, it could hardly shine through; but now there was clear air above the sea, and the clouds were sent up into the sky. This was also a great change.

Read verses 9 to 13.

The third day God divided Sea and Land. We see how at first all things were mixed together, but God divided, and put them in order; and as soon as the world was ready for any one thing, that thing was made—as soon as the land was divided from the sea, the herbs and trees were made.

Read verses 14 to 19.

The fourth day it was nothing on the earth that was made; but it was not the less for the use of man, that the Sun and Moon and Stars appeared in the sky. Their first use was for signs. A sign is what is meant to tell us something by our sight, instead of by our hearing.

We learn from other places in the Bible what it is the sun, moon, and stars, are to tell

us. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork."

If we enjoy all the blessings the sun brings us, light and warmth, and the ripening of the fruits of the earth, and yet feel no thankfulness; if we see the fair moon and countless Stars shining in the still night, and yet feel no wonder and praise—sun, moon, and stars are no signs for us: and yet this was the first use for which they were given; their other uses we all know—how they make our seasons; the sun our years, and the moon our months, and how the sun's rising and setting makes our days and nights.

Read verses 24 to 28.

It was not till the fifth day that anything was made that has life. As the sea was before the land, so also were the creatures of the sea made first; and the same day, the fowls that fly in the air.

Read verses 24 to the end.

It was not till the sixth day that the beasts of the field were made; and last of all MAN, in GOD's own image or likeness, and GOD gave him rule over all other living things.

We are told, "All Thy works praise Thee, O Lord, and Thy saints give thanks unto Thee;" that is, God's works, showing how great and good He is, make good men thank and praise Him, in their hearts and words.

Read Psalm xxxiii. verses 6 to 9, and Psalm cxlviii.

LESSON V.

THE DAY OF REST.

Read Genesis, ii. verses 1 to 3.

THESE verses tell us the same as the Fourth Commandment, that "God rested on the seventh day, and blessed it;" that is, made it to be a happy day—and sanctified or hallowed it; that is, made it to be a holy day, a day of calm enjoyment and rest, giving rise to holy thoughts of love to God for all His goodness, and of how we shall serve and please Him better than we have yet done.

Joining in praise and prayer with other men is a part of the duty and service we owe to God on this day. It is confessing Him before men, owning ourselves His servants. All wild and foolish play, and vain idle talking, or whatever drives all quiet, good, and holy thoughts quite away, is not fit for Sunday.

Read verses 4 to 6.

There had been no rain, and no man to till the ground, yet the herbs of the field were there. God does not need man's work, and unless He blesses it, it will be of no use. He could make things grow, even before there was rain; and if we love Him, He will bless all we do, in ways we have never thought of and cannot know.

Read verse 7.

Man's body was made of the dust of the earth; but the breath of God gave him life, different from the life of the beasts of the field, a living soul. He was made in the image or likeness of God. Man alone, of all the creatures God has made here on earth, is able to know and love Him.

Even the poor heathen have some light; and if they love and follow what light is given them, we may hope that the Christ they never knew will be their Saviour as well as ours.

But God has given us more, and will look for more from us.

He has given us His Word, to teach us to know and love and serve Him; and yet there are too many who will not come to the light, who love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

But such men lose the high place in the world which God gave them, and make themselves worse and lower than the beasts that perish.

This is what it is quite to lose the image of God.

Read verses 8 to 17.

The cool and shady garden with its four rivers, in a hot and dry part of the world, must have been a beautiful and happy place.

Adam needed only fruits to live on, and had plenty. His work was light and easy. There were no evil weeds there. But God said, of the fruit of one tree he must not eat.

"In the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."

Read verses 18 to the end.

Adam could not be happy all alone, even in Eden: that the beasts were all brought round him would only make him feel his loneliness the more. If he spoke there was none to understand him, or to answer; till Eve was brought to be a help meet or fit for him.

LESSON VI.

THE FALL OF MAN.

Read Genesis, iii. verse 1.

THE Serpent here spoken of was the devil in the shape of a serpent or snake.

Subtle means sly or cunning.

If he had said, "Eve, come and eat of the fruit of which God has said, if you eat of it you shall die," that would not have been subtle, and Eve would not have eaten.

No; the devil was very cunning then, as he is now, and that is not the way he tempts.

He tried to make her think it a hard thing that she might not have what she liked, and do as she pleased.

"Yea, hath God said ye shall not eat of all the trees of the garden?"

The devil is the same now as he was then, and tempts us in the same way.

Read verses 2 and 3.

Eve's answer showed that she was not yet quite led away; but oh, the danger of listening to the tempter!

Read verses 4 and 5.

He said now, "Ye shall not surely die." So the devil tells men now. God has said, "The soul that sinneth it shall die." Shall we believe Him or Satan?

Eve listened, and the Serpent went on.

What he now said was in one way true; and yet it was a wicked lie; for he tried to make her think it would be a good thing to have their eyes opened, to know things they had not known before, that it would be for their happiness to know good and evil, though he knew well it would be their ruin and misery.

Read verses 6 and 7.

They had known only good, and so they had not known the difference between good and evil; but now they ate, and "their eyes were opened." They were changed indeed!

Sin, shame, and death, had entered the world, and they hid themselves from God.

Read from verse 8 to the end.

By Adam's sin man lost the image or likeness of God, in which he was first made.

All men since Adam have been born in his likeness, as he was after he fell; (*See Genesis v. 3,*) no longer like God, as Adam was at the fir-

Men felt this, and it made them not wish to be with God, nor to think of Him: they tried to forget Him, and to hide themselves from Him, as Adam and Eve did in the garden.

We have no pleasure in being with anyone so different from us that we cannot feel to know or understand him; so it has been man's nature to hide himself from God ever since the Fall—that is, ever since Adam's sin brought sin into the world.

Very many hide themselves from God still, though the Gospel has told us that Jesus Christ came to make our peace with God; and if, believing this, we will come to God in prayer, He will hear us for Christ's sake, and be a Father to us.

All men are now either seeking and serving God, or hiding themselves from Him, trying to keep out of His way, never coming to Him in prayer.

Man did not however so entirely lose the image of God, that he could ever be quite happy or at ease in being cut off from Him, shut out from His presence.

He had always a sort of uneasy feeling that he was meant for something better, and that if he went on getting more and more unlike God, and further and further from Him, he would be lost for ever.

So it is now, with even the worst men at times.

But God did not leave man without hope,

in the sad state to which he had brought himself.

He promised that the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head :—that is, that Jesus Christ should overcome Satan, and deliver out of his hand all who are willing to be saved through Him.

At last the Saviour came, and a great many did not believe on Him, but those who did—“to them gave He power to become the sons of God.” (*John*, i. 12.)

They learnt to love God as their Father, and all men as brethren. The Spirit of God was with them. If we have this Spirit we shall grow in grace, till we have all its blessed fruits. (*Galatians*, v. 22.)

Knowing and believing the great love of God in sending His Son into the world to die for our sins, makes us love God, and the Holy Spirit then gives us back more and more of the image of God that we had lost ; and when our short life of trial here on earth is ended, “we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.”

LESSON VII.

CAIN AND ABEL.

Read Genesis, iv. verses 1 and 2.

EVE's words (*verse 1.*) showed her joy and thankfulness when her eldest child was born. Little did she know what sorrow that son would cause her in after years.

Read verses 3, 4, and 5.

Cain and Abel both offered a sacrifice to God.

In those early times, the way that men worshipped was by offering a sacrifice, or gift to God. Not that God needs anything from man, for all is His; but it was a way of thanking Him for His goodness, and owning that all they had was His gift, and it had a meaning beyond that, which they could only dimly understand.

It was a type, that is a sign or likeness, of what was to happen in the world many hundreds of years after, namely the death of Christ.

The sacrifice most pleasing to God was some animal that was slain; for it was the best likeness of that great Sacrifice that was in after times to be offered for man, the only sacrifice by which sinful man could ever be made at peace with God.

Those who had faith in God, and in those

promises of Christ's coming, which they could only dimly understand, were already pardoned for His sake, and it was God's will that their worship should fore-show His death.

A lamb, such as Abel offered, was the sacrifice most of all pleasing to God, because the most like Christ, harmless, spotless.

Now, though the Bible does not tell us that God explained all this to Cain and Abel, it is plain that Abel believed and trusted in God, and Cain did not, so Abel offered a better sacrifice than Cain. (*Hebrews*, xi. 4.)

We learn from this that it is not all worship that God will accept. David says, "If I incline unto wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." That is, if instead of having such faith in God as shall make us truly repent of our sins, we are keeping to them in our heart, not really desiring to turn from them, God will not hear us.

But the prayer of faith He always hears. He teaches us to pray aright, and then hears our prayers. (*Psalms* x. 19.)

"Christ ever liveth to make in-ter-cession for us."—(*Hebrews*, vii. 25.) that is, to plead or speak for us with God, that our prayers may be heard and answered.

Cain's sacrifice was not offered in faith like Abel's; and when it was not accepted, instead of humbling himself before God, he "was very wroth, and his countenance fell;" that is, his face changed, and his look was dark and angry

Read verses 6 and 7.

God in His mercy seeks to draw us to Himself, when we are farthest from Him.

"Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." *Isaiah*, i. 18.

So God reasoned with Cain, and while he was in this evil and angry mood, told him that if he did like Abel, he also should be accepted, but warned him, "sin lieth at the door,"—always near at hand, seeking an entrance into our heart, but we must rule over our evil desires, and not let them rule over us. (1 *Peter*, v. 8.)

So kindly did God reason with Cain; but the gracious words did not reach his heart, to turn him to repentance, or soften his fierce anger.

Read verses 8 to 12.

When God spake with Cain again, it was no longer in warning, but in judgment.

A fu-gi-tive and va-ga-bond means one that wanders about, without having any place to belong to, or settled home.

There would be no use in Cain trying to live in one place, to till the ground, as he had done before, for his labour would be in vain, it would not yield him her strength.

Read verses 13, 14, and 15.

He felt now what it would be to be cast off by the God he had so grievously offended, and with a mur-der-er's evil con-science, he dreaded that as he had shed man's blood, by

man should his blood be shed; but so great is the loving-kindness of God, that even in His wrath He remembers mercy, and "the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should slay him."

LESSON VIII.

THE FLOOD, OR DELUGE.

Read Genesis, vi. verses 1, 2, and 3.

AFTER the death of Abel, Adam and Eve had another son named Seth.

Seth seems to have been more like Abel than like Cain, and to have brought up his family to love and serve the Lord. (iv. 26.)

Those sprung from Seth were a godly race, and were called "the sons of God," or children of God. Those sprung from Cain were a wicked race, and are called "children of men."

Yet the race of Seth, though better than the family of Cain, were also born in the likeness of sinful Adam, and had lost much of the image of God; (*Genesis*, v. 3.) and so it was, they took the daughters of the wicked race for their wives.

They would not have wished to do so if they had not lost the image of God.

God hates all evil, and those who love Him

will hate it also, and will wish to spend their lives with those who will join them in loving and serving the Lord; not with those who will turn their hearts from Him.

We have all too little of God's likeness, and too much of Adam's, to be ever safe when we are in bad company.

The sons of God were soon led away by the daughters of men to be as bad as themselves.

These things are written for our learning.

The solemn warning at the beginning of the third verse should indeed make us fear to sin, lest we should be cast off for ever.

When wicked men, or Satan, or our own evil desires, would lead us into sin, God's Holy Spirit strives with us, and "as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (*Romans*, viii. 14.)

Read verses 5, 6, 7, 8.

It was not only man's deeds that were evil, the very thoughts of his heart were so bad that he could do nothing good; (*Matthew*, xv. 19.) "and it repented the Lord that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart."

Noah alone loved God with all his heart; he was not only a righteous man himself, but a preacher of righteousness. (*See 2 Peter*, ii. 5; and *Hebrews*, xi. 7.)

Read from verse 9 to the end.

The building of the Ark before their eyes was itself the most solemn sermon he could

preach. Noah's faith in God's warnings was thus shown by his deeds, which condemned the world more strongly than any words could.

In *verse* 11, violence means fighting and quarrelling: the wicked are often at strife.

It is those who love God as their Father, and all men as brethen, who live in peace one with another.

Genesis, vii., viii., and ix. tell us the rest of the story of the Flood, and of the covenant or agreement God made with Noah, promising that there should never again be a flood, and renewing the covenant made with Adam.

LESSON IX.

THE BUILDERS OF BABEL.

Read Genesis, xi. verses 1 to 9.

WE are told in the chapter before this, (*verse* 25,) that "In those days the Earth was divided." It is supposed from this, that God then divided the world into countries, that some men might go to one land, and some to another, and so all the Earth be peopled; and these builders of Babel did not like this, and set themselves against it, and tried to hinder it; as if they *could* hinder the purposes of God—as if God could not hinder and put a stop to anything that man might plan.

They built trusting in themselves, thinking that nothing could stop them; like the boastful

sinner we read of in the Psalms, who said, "I shall never be cast down, there shall no harm happen unto me."

Wicked men think sometimes that they have been so clever, and have laid all their plans so well, that all is sure to go right, and that nothing can stop them—and then God puts a stop to all their plans, in some way they never thought of; whereas good men's plans, that are not so clever or so wise in the eyes of men, often prosper better, because God blesses them.

God helps those who trust in Him, and makes all things work together for their good.

The race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.

David says, "I will not trust in my bow; it is not my sword that shall help me."

We have seen that these builders of Babel built their tower that they might not be scattered, never thinking how God could scatter them, if it was His will.

Men often bring on themselves the very things they are afraid of; and so it was with them, for God punished them by scattering them so completely, that no two of them could keep together, for "God confounded their language, that they should not understand one another's speech."

We know how, more than three thousand years after the building of Babel, Herod had the young children killed, that he might kill Him who was born King of the Jews, never

thinking that God would know how to deliver Him out of his hands.

Thirty years later, the chief priests and Pharisees said, (speaking of Jesus Christ,) "If we let Him alone, the Romans will come and take away our place and nation," so they put Him to death; and God punished them by bringing against them those very Romans they were afraid of.

Men of this sort always think first how they can do best for themselves, keep themselves out of trouble, or please themselves.

Such men are never at peace. They trouble and worry themselves, because they know that, manage as they will, things will not always go as they wish, and they never can be sure how it will be.

To be at peace and really happy, quiet and easy in mind, we must know for certain that whatever happens, all will be right.

Such peace none can have but those who love God. They always think first what will be right for them to do, and what will please God, and they know that if they do that, God will take care of them, and will not let anything happen to them, that will not be for their good in the end.

Whatever God would have them do, whether they like it or not, they say in their hearts, "Thy will be done," and as far as they can they do it. They so love God that they had rather do His will than please themselves.

LESSON X.

ABRAHAM.

AFTER the Flood men were no better, and were forgetting God more and more.

Then God chose a holy man, named Abraham, to be the father of a great nation, to whom He should always make Himself known, by so many signs that they could not forget Him; and of this family or nation Christ was to be born.

The New Testament speaks often of the holy men of old, Abel, Noah, Abraham, good men in a wicked world; and teaches us that we are to take pattern by them; to learn in what way we can be like them.

Abraham we are taught to take pattern by more than any other: he is called the Father of the Faithful, and the Friend of God, and we are taught that from his example we are to learn what true faith is.

Abraham did not set himself against the will of God, as the builders of Babel did. He showed his faith by being ready to leave his own country and his father's house at the command of God, so firmly did he trust in God, and in the promises that were then made to him.

Read Genesis, xii. verses, 1 2, 3.

The promise at the end of verse 3 meant that the Saviour of the world should be born

of his family, which came to pass by the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, being of the family or nation that was sprung from Abraham.

Read verses 4 to 8.

God promised Abraham that He would give the land that He had called him into, to his family after him.

Abraham showed very firm faith by believing these promises, for he had grown an old man and had as yet no child, nor did even a foot of that land belong to him.

(See Hebrews, xi. 8; and Acts, vii. 5.)

Read from verse 9 to the end.

Even Abraham's faith was not perfect, for we read here that Abraham denied his wife through fear, though faith should make us do right and fear nothing, for God has promised that all shall work together for our good if we love Him. (*Romans*, viii. 28.)

We have seen in verse 4 of this chapter that Abraham's nephew, Lot, went with him to the Land of Canaan. The next chapter shows us why they did not go on living together.

Read Genesis, xiii. verses 1 to 13.

Abraham showed great kindness in letting Lot choose the part of the land he liked best. Lot made what worldly men would think a very wise choice, for the land which he chose was as beautiful a land as any in the world; but it was not a choice likely to be for his real

happiness, for "the men of Sodom were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly."

The rest of the chapter tells us how God renewed His promises to Abraham after Lot had left him.

Read verses 14 to the end.

It is not easy to find the sense of *Genesis* xiv., from the great number of names in it.

We learn from it that the Land of Canaan was divided into a number of small states, which had each their king, and that four of these kings made war upon five others, among whom was the King of Sodom, where Lot dwelt; and Lot together with some of the people of Sodom, and all their goods, were carried off by their enemies.

This was the first trouble that came upon Lot from his having gone to live in such a wicked place.

Read verses 13 to 16.

Abraham hearing what had happened, gathered all his people together, and freed Lot from the hands of his enemies, and brought back all the people and the goods that they had taken.

Read verses 17 to 20.

Two kings went to meet Abraham on his return. One was the King of Sodom, for whom, in helping Lot, he had done so much. The other was a very different king, different from all others among whom he dwelt; for he

was not only a king, but a priest of the Most High God ; he showed that he was higher than Abraham by giving him his blessing, and Abraham owned that Mel-chis-e-dec was one higher than himself, by giving him tithes (or a tenth part) of all that had been taken.

This we learn from Hebrews, vii. In this chapter our Lord Jesus Christ is likened to Mel-chis-e-dec, in being one by Himself, different from all other priests among men, a priest and king for ever and ever.

In one of the Psalms also which foretells of Christ, (*Psalms* cx.) we are told He is "a Priest for ever after the order of Mel-chis-e-dec." We cannot understand this fully, but as all Scripture is written for our learning, we should try to understand it as far as we can.

Read verses 21 to the end.

Abraham was content with what God had given him, and desired nothing more.

LESSON XI.

ABRAHAM'S FAITH.

Read Genesis, xv. verse 1.

In this chapter we find that God renewed his promises to Abraham in the most solemn manner. How gracious are the words of the

Lord in the first verse! A shield is what men carry in battle to keep off all that might hurt or harm them.

Read verses 2 to 5.

Abraham felt that one thing was still wanting to his happiness. He had as yet no child to make heir to all that he had; but the Lord told him again that he should be the fore-father of countless numbers.

Read verse 6.

Faith is the Bible word for such true believing in the Lord as Abraham's was.

We see how Abraham believed all that God told him, however unlikely and hard to believe it might seem, and trusted in God, as a child trusts in his father to take care of him, and knows that if he is going where his father sends him, and doing as his father tells him, he is safe.

Abraham's whole life showed that he believed God's promises, and felt that it was a better thing to do God's will than to follow his own way; and that is true faith.

If we have faith like Abraham's, we shall so believe that the Gospel promises are worth more than all else, that our great wish will be to live like Christians rather than to please ourselves; for unless our faith is shown by our lives, as Abraham's was, it is no true faith.

All who truly believe in the Gospel promises of pardon for Jesus Christ's sake, are saved through Him.

The wicked do not really believe in their hearts in the great love of Jesus Christ in dying for us, or they would hate sin for His sake, and wish of all things to be freed from it; and knowing that they could never free themselves from sin, but by the grace of God through Jesus Christ, they would pray with all their hearts for the help of the Holy Spirit, that they might know, and love, and believe on Him better, and be able to stand against sin and temptation.

If we really believe that God will punish sin, we shall fear to sin. If we really believe in God's great love for man in sending His Son into the world, to die for our sins, we shall love God. If we really love God we shall delight to pray to and to praise Him all we can. Like Abraham we shall go where God would have us go, and do as God would have us do, believing even when things are most against us that all will work together for our good.

Read Romans, iv. verse 18 to the end, which speaks of Abraham.

We learn from these verses that if we believe in God, put our trust in Him, and love Him as Abraham did, we shall be counted righteous for Christ's sake, as Abraham was.

A man who believes and loves God as Abraham did, will lead a good life, trying to do as he ought both to God and man; he will be sober, honest, and chaste, just and kind to ^{all}

because he knows that this is the will of God, who hates sin, and that if he is sinning he cannot be at peace with God, and that he cannot bear; but he never thinks he can gain Heaven for himself. What makes him so love God is his faith in Jesus Christ; that is, his belief in the great love of God to man, shown to us in all the Bible makes known of Jesus Christ coming into the world to save sinners.

Jesus Christ was the only one who ever lived on earth without sin; and we are taught in the New Testament that those who believe on Him with all their heart are so joined to Him, that His perfect goodness is counted as theirs: they are counted as just or righteous for His sake.

But are the wicked counted righteous for Christ's sake as well as the good?

No; not unless they are brought by the Holy Spirit to repentance and faith. None who do not hate sin really believe in the great love of Jesus Christ in dying for sinners.

It is in the Son of God having died for us and risen again, that we must believe, and in the promises of pardon and peace through Him; and show by our lives that we do believe, as Abraham's faith in the promises God made to him was shown by his life.

Read Genesis, xv. verses 7 to 11.

What God told Abraham to do was on purpose to show that these promises were a very solemn agreement made with God Himself.

Read verses 12 to the end.

After this we are told that a deep sleep fell on Abraham, and a horror of great darkness fell on him. A strange dread filled his mind, so it was not likely he would ever forget what was then told him about what should befall those who should come after him hundreds of years after he should be laid in the grave; and we shall do well to take great notice of it also, for we shall not rightly understand a great deal of the Bible that follows, if we do not bear in mind that God had foretold long before, the things that befell the Israelites, or seed of Abraham, namely, their bondage in a strange land—the land of Egypt—and their deliverance, and return to that land of Canaan God had promised Abraham should be theirs.

LESSON XII

HAGAR.—CIRCUMCISION.

Read Genesis, xvi. verses 1 to 3.

IN those old times even good men, like Abraham, had sometimes more than one wife. It was against the law that God made at the beginning of the world; but He was pleased to allow it, till He should make His will more

fully known to men, by the Gospel, which plainly forbid it.

Abraham had grown an old man, and had no child yet; though God had promised he should have a son; and as it did not seem likely that Sarah would have a child, she brought her maid Hagar to Abraham, to be his wife.

Read verses 4 and 5.

Hagar was a bondmaid—not a hired servant, but a bondmaid—that is, she belonged to her mistress Sarah. She was bound to her for life, and had no right ever to leave Abraham's house. To understand what we are told about Hagar we should remember this.

It seems that when Hagar found she should have a child, and Sarah had none, she despised her mistress, and would not obey her, and Sarah complained of her to Abraham.

Read verses 6 to the end.

God had pity on Hagar in her trouble, and sent an angel to comfort her, and to promise that her son should be the father of a great nation, but at the same time told her that her duty was to go back to her mistress, and submit herself to her.

CIRCUMCISION.

Read Genesis, xvii.

This chapter tells us that God commanded that all the seed of Abraham should be cir-

cumcised. This was a mark set upon them to show that they were God's people.

It was not only a mark, but a sign.

Cir-cum-ci-sion was cutting off part of the flesh, and casting it away; and this was to be a sign of how they should cast off their sinful or fleshly nature.

We have all the sinful nature that we get from Adam, and we have a higher nature too, something left to us of the image of God that Adam lost at the Fall.

Circumcision was a painful thing, and yet if they were to be God's people it must be done. From this we learn that sinful desires cannot be overcome without pain: but are not *Christians* bound to cast off sin if *they* will be God's people?

In true Christians the higher nature more and more overcomes the other; so we get back more and more of the image of God that we had lost by Adam's sin and our own.

The New Testament teaches us that *Christians* must cir-cum-cise their *hearts*; that instead of cutting off a piece of the flesh, they must cut off the sinful desires of their hearts, and this they must do by seeking God's grace in prayer, that their hearts may be inclined to keep His laws—and *unless they do this they cannot be God's people.*

We are told of our Lord Jesus Christ that "He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He obeyed God's will in

all things, and we are told that if we have not the Spirit of Christ we are none of His.

Now if we have faith in Christ, that is, believe that He has made our peace with God, and seek for grace through Him, our hearts will be so changed that we shall love God's law, and no longer find it hard to obey.

Jesus says, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

If we are willing to be saved on the terms God offers us—free pardon for Christ's sake, and to live henceforth as children of God—we shall grow in grace, till we so love God, that we shall desire to keep all His Commandments, as much as in a state of sin we desire to break them.

So circumcision, which was a painful thing, was done away with when Christ came.

And what have we instead?

Baptism—which is a sign of the washing away of sin, and rising to a new life of holiness.

Saint Paul, writing to the Jews, as the circumcised people of God, says, "He is not a Jew (that is, not one of the people of God) who is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly, and circum-

cision is that of the heart in the Spirit. (*Romans*, ii. 28, 29.)

In 1 *Corinthians*, vii. 19, it is said, "Circumcision is nothing, and un-circumcision is nothing—but keeping the commandments of God."

In *Philippians*, iii. 3, we are told that those are "the circumcision, (that is, the people of God,) which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh."

LESSON XIII.

THE ANGELS' VISIT.—SODOM AND GOMORRAH.

Read Genesis, xviii. *verses 1 to 8.*

GOD had made known to Abraham that Ishmael was not the son that had been promised him, but that Sarah should bear him a son in her old age; and now that the time was drawing near, three heavenly visitants came to tell her as well as Abraham that so it should be.

Read verses 9 to 15.

Sarah's faith was not so firm as Abraham's, and she was rebuked for her lightness in mocking at the message of the Lord.

How unlike the Virgin Mary!

When the angel Gabriel told *her* what was yet more wonderful and hard to believe, she meekly and humbly answered, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord: be unto me according to thy word." (*Luke* i. 38.)

Read verses 16 to the end.

Abraham is called in Scripture the Friend of God, and we see how highly God honoured him, telling Abraham His purposes, as a man tells his friend what he means to do. (*See John*, xv. 15.)

And why was this great honour shown to Abraham? (*See verse 19.*) How then can those masters of households be doing as God would have them do, who count it no part of their duty to command their household to keep the way of the Lord?

Abraham did not know the very great wickedness of the people of Sodom, as it was known to the Lord, or perhaps he would not have pleaded for them. Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?

The Vale of Siddim, where Sodom and Gomorrah stood, was as beautiful a land as any in the world; but the people were wicked, and sinners before the Lord exceedingly, as what we are told in the next chapter too plainly shows; God had already punished them, as we have seen, (*Genesis*, xiv.) but they went on as badly as ever. God's patience was at last worn out. They were to have no more warnings.

Read Genesis, xix. *verses 1 to 4.*

Two angels came quietly in the evening twilight, looking like common men, to the gate of the city. Lot entertained them, but the men of Sodom made a disturbance in the street, and by their foul language showed the foulness of their hearts.

The people of any place must be bad indeed, when the old join with the young in making such an uproar as is described in these and the four following verses.

Bad as the men of Sodom were, one might have thought that when strangers had come among them they would try for the time to behave better; but the fearful wickedness of man, when he has given himself up to the devil, is never so plainly shown as when it breaks through all the bonds that hold men back from evil. How often have all of us been held back by those merciful safeguards God has given to us in the best of our natural feelings!

But it was not so with the people of Sodom.

They were indeed so wicked that we cannot wonder God purposed to destroy them utterly; for the worst sorts of wickedness are so catching, that spreading from one to another, it takes hold of those who at one time we never could have thought would have so fallen.

Read verses 9 to 11.

The answers made by the men of Sodom, when Lot went out to try and quiet them, were just such as we should have expected from such men.

We are taught that if we, like Lot, are ready to entertain strangers who may need our kindness, the strangers may prove to be God's messengers of mercy to us, as these angels were to Lot. (*Hebrews*, xiii. 2.)

But if Lot had *received* angels unawares, the men of Sodom had unawares *threatened* angels, and they were smitten with blindness.

Read verses 12 to 16.

Lot's sons-in-law seem to have been hardened and blinded like the rest of the men of the city. Even Lot lingered, not understanding how great was the danger; for living among such men, the eyes of even the righteous become blinded.

Read verses 17 to 26.

His wife could not see the danger at all: her heart was still in the wicked city she had been forced to leave.

This chapter shows God's wrath against such deadly sin as that of the men of Sodom.

See Jude, 7, and 2 Peter, ii. 6.

Genesis, xx. shows us that Abraham was again led into the folly and weakness of denying his wife, as he had done before.

See Genesis, xii. Abraham was rebuked by a heathen prince, one to whom he ought to have been a teacher of righteousness, rather than one rebuked and taught.

LESSON XIV.

ISHMAEL AND ISAAC A TYPE OF THE LAW AND
THE GOSPEL.

ABRAHAM had two sons.

Ishmael, the son of the bond-woman Hagar, was born first; but it was to Isaac, the son of Sarah, Abraham's wife, that the promises were made.

We are taught in the New Testament that Ishmael is a type, that is, a figure or likeness, of God's people under the *Law*, held in bondage like Hagar's bondage—and Isaac is a type, or likeness, of those who are children of God through faith in Christ, to whom the promises of the *Gospel* are made, as God's promises of old were to Isaac.

We are often told in Scripture that the Jews of old were *under the Law*, and we are *under the Gospel*; and it is far better to be under the Gospel than under the Law.

Long before the coming of Christ, God made a covenant or agreement with man. He gave him the Law; that is, the Ten Commandments, and other laws, that he might know right from wrong; for men had so lost the image of God, as not to know rightly what was sin; and when God gave them the Law, He told them that if they kept rightly the whole Law, they should be saved by it.

But the more men learn to know and understand God's Law, the more they feel what sinners they are, and that they never can keep it as they ought, to be saved by it; so they were no better off under the Law than before.

This is called in Scripture a state of bondage. Men under the Law feel themselves tied and bound by it, and cannot free themselves from sin. We none of us can, but by the grace of God through Jesus Christ.

The Law was given by Moses: grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. (*John*, i. 17.)

The Law is, however, of great good.

"The law is our school-master to bring us unto Christ;" that is, it teaches us our need of a Saviour.

Abraham is called the Father of the Faithful; and we are taught that the promises of God are not to the seed of Abraham after the flesh only; that is, not to the Jew or Israelite only; but to those who are the children of Abraham after the Spirit, who have the faith that Abraham had.

Read Galatians, iii. 7, 9, 26, 29.

I said, we can none of us keep the Law as it ought to be kept if we are to be saved by it.

Read Galatians, iii. 10, 13, 14, 22.

We are told also in the Epistle to the Romans, that "all have sinned."

Why is it we cannot keep the Law as it ought to be kept? Because the Law is

spiritual, and we are carnal, sold under sin.
(*Romans*, vii. 14.)

A man has not broken the *letter* or *words* of the Law, "Thou shalt do no murder," unless he has killed another; but he has broken its spirit if he has ever hated another, and it is the spirit God looks at. (1 *John*, iii. 15.)

From another text we learn that if we have ever dealt unfairly, we have broken the Eighth Commandment, though we may never think ourselves thieves.

(*See also Matthew*, v. 28.) So it is with all God's laws, and if we have ever broken one, even in thought, we are guilty before God as if we had broken all. (*James*, ii. 10.)

Who then would desire to be under the Law, or think to be saved if judged by it?

But we are told, "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour, therefore love is the fulfilling of the Law." (*Romans*, xiii. 9, 10.)

We are told, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself."

This love to God and man is the first of the fruits of the Spirit, by which we may know that we have the true faith in Christ, the gift of God, by which we are saved.

"O Thou that hearest prayer, unto Thee shall all flesh come."

"Lord I believe, help Thou mine unbelief"

Read Romans, viii. to verse 16.

Read Galatians, vi. 7 to 10.

Read 1 John, iii. 6, 7, 8.

Read 1 John, v. 18.

LESSON XV.

OFFERING OF ISAAC—DEATH OF SARAH—
MARRIAGE OF ISAAC.

Read Genesis, xxii.

ABRAHAM'S faith was more shown in this greatest trial than at any other time of his life, by his being ready to kill and offer to God his son Isaac, believing that God could raise Isaac from the dead.

See Hebrews, xi. verses 17, 18, 19.

God had said, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called:" that is, the promises made to Abraham should come to pass through Isaac, in the seed that should spring from him: and Abraham so firmly believed this, that it gave him strength to offer up his son; but think what the faith must have been that could stand such a trial!

Read Genesis, xxiii.

When Sarah died, Abraham had no place to bury her in; for none of that land belonged to him, "no, not so much as to set his foot on."

The people of the land were quite willing that Sarah should be buried in their ground, in any burial-place of theirs that Abraham liked; but Abraham was not willing (though he did not tell them why,) that his wife should be laid in the grave among an unbelieving people who were under the curse of God; (*See Genesis*, ix. 25.) so he wished them to let him buy a cave in a field that he might bury Sarah, and they wanted him not to pay for the cave; but Abraham did not wish that: he wished that the place where Sarah was buried should be his own land, and a burial place for his family for evermore, firmly believing God's promise that that land should in time to come belong to them.

The people of the land were not unmannerly nor greedy in their dealings with Abraham; but treated him with honour and respect, as he had doubtless always treated them. Those who are rough and unmannerly in their behaviour lower themselves by it more than those they treat so.

Read Genesis, xxiv.

We learn from *verse* 1, that the Lord had kept His promise to Abraham, that He would bless him.

Abraham did not wish his son Isaac to take a wife from among the wicked and unbelieving people of that land.

The world had already had warning enough of the danger of the sons or people of God

choosing their wives from among the daughters of men, that is, the wicked or unbelieving. (*See Genesis, vi.*)

Abraham was also unwilling that Isaac should go back to the land that he had himself been called by God to leave, as he could not think that was the will of the Lord.

So now that he was getting old and near his end, he made his servant solemnly promise and swear, that he would not take a wife for Isaac of the daughters of the Canaanites, nor yet take Isaac back to the Land of Haran—and then sent him to seek a wife for his son, firmly trusting in the promised blessing of the Lord to make the way easy.

If we had faith like Abraham, that all that happens is ordered by God, who will bless and preserve those who love and serve Him, how many fears and what trouble of mind it would often save us!

The servant, too, was a pious man, and prayed for the blessing of God; and his prayer was wonderfully answered.

LESSON XVI.

ESAU SELLING HIS BIRTHRIGHT.

WE have seen that the promises God made to Abraham, were to go down from father to son, to his son Isaac and to Isaac's seed.

Isaac had two sons, Jacob and Esau, whose birth we read of in *Genesis*, xxv. Esau was born first.

Now when anything goes down from father to son, it usually goes to the eldest ; but Esau sold his birth-right, his right to be counted eldest, to his brother Jacob, for a mess of pottage.

Read Genesis, xxv. verses 29 to the end.

I have said before that one great good we gain from the Old Testament is, that it helps us to understand the New Testament, which tells us to take pattern by the holy men of old times. We are also told to take warning from those who by their ungodly lives called down on themselves the anger of God.

Esau is one of those we are told to take warning from, to take heed that we are not profane like Esau, who for a morsel of meat sold his birth-right. (*Hebrews*, xii. 16.)

So we must try all we can to understand what was Esau's sin, that we may not be like him.

Now think what it was that Esau sold for a mess of pottage—*his right to the promises of God*—those promises that God had made to his grandfather Abraham, which were to go down from father to son, till God in His own good time should bring them to pass—the promise that his seed should some day have for their own that Land of Canaan, to which God had called Abraham ; and

better promise still, that in his seed should all the families of the earth be blessed ; which came to pass by the Virgin Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ, being one of the seed of Abraham, or sprung from him.

Now does it not show that Esau was a man without religion, what is called in the Bible "a profane person," to care so little for the promises of God?

If Esau had waited, he might soon have had some food ready for himself without taking Jacob's. He said he was "ready to die;" but is not that the way men often talk when they desire anything very much, and do not like to wait? "I can't do without it; I must have it."

So Esau got what he wanted ; and that was all he cared for then ; but when he had eaten the pottage, and gone away, was he really any better for having got what he wanted directly ? and could he ever get back the birth-right after he had once sold it?

No, he did not care for that then ; but a time came when he cared for it very much, and would gladly have given all he had to get back his birth-right ; but it was too late.

And has not God made promises to *us*? Have not *we* a Promised Land?

We are taught that Christians are not like Ishmael who had no promises, but like Isaac who had the promises; but may not *we* sell *our* birthright—the right to Heaven which

Christ has bought for us with His own blood—for things of this world, that are of little worth, and will soon be gone?

We wish for things very much, and we think like Esau that we cannot do without them; but if Esau had had faith like his grandfather, he would have known that God would provide all that was needful; he had only to be patient, but he would not.

And Christ has said to us, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things (that is, all things needful for this life) shall be added unto you."

So we must strive and pray that we may not be like Esau, who sold his birth-right for what could only profit him for a short time; but like Abraham, who, as we have seen, was ready to leave his home, and even to offer up his dear son, if it was God's will, and God blessed him—as He will bless us, if we have faith like his—in this life, as well as in the life to come.

He may not see fit to give us riches, but He will give us what the Bible calls the true riches—happiness worth more than riches.

Read Hebrews, xii. verses 16, 17.

LESSON XVII.

JACOB GETTING THE BLESSING.

WE have seen the way that Esau sold his birthright, as if he did not think it anything worth having, and said, "What profit shall this birthright do to me?" that is, "Of what use is it?"

He did not think the promises of God meant anything.

So it is with all careless sinners. They do not really believe God's promises, or they would not sell them for pleasures that are soon gone, or riches that they cannot take away with them when this short life is over.

But it was God's will that a blessing *for his own life here* was to be joined to the promises of the birth-right that Esau sold.

Esau did not know that "plenty of corn and wine" was to be part of the blessing he should lose, or he would not have sold it—he would have cared about that, for the things of this present life were the things he did care for.

Read Genesis, xxvii.

Isaac was grown old and blind, and as he thought he should soon die, and knew nothing of what had passed between Jacob and Esau, he wished to give his first-born his blessing. Rebekah heard this, and as she loved Jacob

best, she wished to get the blessing for him.

Now God had told Rebekah, before either of them were born, that the elder should serve the younger. (*Genesis*, xxv. 23.) So she ought to have trusted to God's promise that Jacob should be put before Esau ; but she did not trust in God, and so took her own way to bring it about.

Being over careful to bring about anything we wish for is very likely to lead us into sin, and indeed is itself sin. God has promised that all shall work together for our good, if we love Him, (*Romans*, viii. 28.) and if we trust in Him, we shall not be troubled in mind as to how we shall bring things about, for we shall know that God will order everything as will be really best for us, and such firm trust will save us from being tempted to sin like what Rebekah was guilty of, to bring about her wishes.

Jacob did not at first wish to do as his mother said ; but that was not because it was wrong, but only because he did not wish his father to think him a deceiver, or a cheat—so he let his mother persuade him, (*verses 11 to 17.*) and the first lie he told his father soon led to another and a worse. (*Verses 19, 20.*)

The blessing Isaac spoke was really a message from God, and Jacob and Esau seem both to have known that whatever

their father spoke of either would come to pass.

When Esau sold his birth-right, he did not know he was selling his father's blessing, along with those promises to Abraham that he thought so little of.

So it often is now with those who sell their precious Christian birth-right, for sinful pleasures or gains. They are not only losing those Bible promises they now think so little of, but throwing away blessings, and bringing on themselves troubles *in this life*, which perhaps, if they thought of it at the time, they would not do.

Read Matthew, vi. verses 25 to the end ; (taking thought means, in these verses, being over careful and troubled.)

"Godliness hath the promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." (1 *Timothy*, iv. 8.)

"Godliness with contentment is great gain." (1 *Timothy*, vi. 6.)

LESSON XVIII.

JACOB PUNISHED AND COMFORTED.

Jacob did very wickedly in deceiving his blind old father, and saying that he was Esau; and when his father asked him how

he had found the venison so quickly, his heart must have sunk within him, and he must have wished he had not told that first lie, in saying he was Esau; for Jacob, though he did so wickedly in this, was really a man who loved and feared God; and yet such was his fear of his father's anger, and of losing the blessing, that rather than own then what he had done, he told another lie, much worse than the first.

Jacob would not really have lost the birth-right and blessing if he had spoken the truth, for God had said before he was born, that it was to be his, and God could have brought it about.

All things that happen are ordered by God, and even wicked men are often working out His purposes, when they think they are following their own.

The way to keep out of trouble is to keep out of sin, lest like Jacob we should be led to sin still more to get ourselves out of trouble, and so either bring on ourselves greater trouble afterwards, or else, what is far worse, get hardened in sin, and further and further from God and repentance.

If we did not know from other parts of the Bible that God loved Jacob best, we should perhaps from this chapter think him worse than Esau; but "God seeth not as man seeth." A man may at some one time do worse than another does, and yet be all the

time a better man. Jacob in the rest of his life showed how much he loved and trusted in God, and Esau never showed that he cared for or thought of God at all.

Jacob was not one whom God would let go on without any troubles to make him think, or would cast off at the last.

God often sends troubles and sorrows in love and mercy, to bring us back to Him, and save us from being hardened in sin.

Read Hebrews, xii. verses 5 to 9.

Jacob's punishment soon began, in his having to leave his home for fear his brother should kill him. Rebekah was punished by never seeing him again.

When Jacob was journeying on foot all by himself, and had left all those that he had ever known and loved, was not that very likely to set him thinking? It is at such times that God draws near to us, and visits those He loves with holy thoughts.

With Jacob He did more.

Read Genesis, xxviii. verses 10 to the end.

Would not that ladder make Jacob feel, all his life after, how near God was?

Should not this make *us* think of the way from earth to Heaven that Christ has made for us? He says, "I AM THE WAY."

Jesus Christ, both God and Man—in Heaven with God, and on earth with us—is like that ladder.

Rebekah had told Jacob to go to Haran,

where she had been brought up, to her brother Laban, whom she had not seen since she had parted from him as a young girl, to go to Canaan with Abraham's servant, as we have read in *Genesis*, xxiv.

Genesis, xxix. tells us how God prospered Jacob on his journey, and brought him to Haran, where his mother's kindred dwelt—of his joyful meeting with them—of his love for Rachel, and how Laban deceived and cheated him in something the same sort of way as he had before deceived and cheated his father.

God often brings us to serious thought, and repentance for our past sins, by others sinning against us in the same sort of way as we have sinned before.

Such is the blindness of our hearts, that we often think very little of the wrong things we do ; but if others do the same to us, we feel directly that *they* have done as they ought not.

So when others do wrong by us, we should ask ourselves if we have never done anything like it, or might not have been tempted to do the same. This will make it easier to forgive, and lead us to repent of what we have done amiss.

LESSON XIX.

JACOB'S RETURN TO CANAAN.

AFTER Jacob had married Leah, he lived other seven years with Laban, and married Rachel also, which was according to the custom of those times.

Laban after that gave him as wages, a part of the cattle he had the care of, which increased so much that he grew rich, as we learn from the last verse of *Genesis*, xxx.

Read Genesis, xxxi. verses 1, 2, 3.

We find from these verses that Jacob and Laban were not so friendly as they had been, and that God commanded Jacob to return to the Land of Canaan, and promised to be with him.

Jacob obeyed God, and set out with all his family and cattle, but his heart was full of fear of his brother Esau, who had once said he would kill him.

Read Genesis, xxxii. to verse 8.

He sent a humble message to Esau, that he might not think he wished to set himself up above him ; then he did what we should all do in fear and trouble—he prayed to God.

Read verses 9 to 12.

We see that at the beginning of his prayer he humbled himself, calling to mind God's great goodness, of which he felt himself so little worthy ; then he prayed that God would

deliver him out of the hand of Esau; and lastly, called to mind the gracious promises God had made him.

What prayer could be better than this?

We ought, like Jacob, to join humble thanks to God with prayer, calling to mind God's great goodness to us in times past, and our own unworthiness, and like Jacob, claiming God's promises to us, those better promises made to all true believers, that He will grant them pardon for Christ's sake, and the help of the Holy Spirit.

If, like Jacob, when we are in any fear or difficulty, any trouble, danger, or temptation, we pray thus to God, He will give us the wisdom that we need, and make our hearts right. (*James*, i. 5.)

Those who instead of doing this, trust in their own wisdom, often do foolish things; for God hides from them what is wisest to do, or they do what to man's wisdom seems best, and it turns out the worst.

Read verses 13 to 23.

God gave Jacob wisdom, and made his heart right, and we find he sent a present to Esau, and another humble message.

After Jacob's peace-making message to Esau, he went on his way, and seemed to fear nothing. "They have nothing to fear who put their trust in God. "The wicked flee when no man pursueth; but the righteous are bold as a lion." (*Proverbs*, xxviii. 1.)

LESSON XX.

JACOB WRESTLING WITH THE ANGEL.

GOD showed Jacob a great mark of favour, and that He was indeed as much with him, as when he had seen the ladder that reached from earth to Heaven, so many years before, when leaving the land he was now going back to.

Read Genesis, xxxii. 24 to the end.

What we are told here was yet more wonderful than the Vision of the Ladder; perhaps more wonderful than we can any of us understand.

God sent an angel to wrestle (that is, to strive and struggle with Jacob, and Jacob was allowed to overcome the angel.

What is said of this is very hard to understand. It is spoken of in one other place in the Bible, but only very darkly; (*Hosea*, xii. 4.) but those who have studied the Bible much more than we have, and understand it much better, tell us that this wrestling of Jacob is meant as a type or likeness of prayer, and that we are to learn from it that if we go on wrestling, that is, striving earnestly in prayer, even when it may seem that God is against us, and will not hear us, God *will* hear, and we shall conquer at last, just as Jacob overcame the angel.

Jesus Christ has taught us the same thing, both by a Parable and a Miracle.

The Parables are those lessons or stories by which Christ taught the people things they did not know or understand before, by their likeness to things they did know, or could understand easily.

One of the Parables tells us of a poor woman, who went to an unjust judge, (*Luke, xviii. to verse 8.*) that he might take her part against one who had done her wrong ; just as we should go to God, to take our part against our great enemy, the devil.

The judge was a bad man, and for a long time he would not hear or help her ; but at last he was so tired of her coming so often that he did what she wished.

We are to learn from this, that if the judge, who was only a man, and even a bad man, helped the poor woman at last, because she came so often, how much more will God help *us* at last, if we go on praying?

I said, a Miracle teaches us the same thing:

A poor heathen woman, who had heard of Christ, came to Him to heal her daughter, (*Matthew, xv. 21 to 28.*) and for some time He would not, and said, "It is not meet (or fit) to take the children's bread, and cast it to dogs,"—as much as to say, "You are not one of the Israelites, who believe in God, and are His children; but one of the heathen, who do not know God, but are like "

brutes that have no understanding. It is not to such as you I am sent, but to God's children."

One would have thought this would have driven her away; but no, she humbly answered, "Truth Lord, yet the dogs eat of the crumbs that fall from their master's table;" and the kind and loving Jesus who had only *seemed* unkind to try her faith and make it perfect, said, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Happy shall we be if our prayers are heard and answered so; as they will be, if we have faith like hers.

Read Genesis, xxxiii.

Those who put their trust in the Lord, and have prayed for His protection, see danger coming, and are not dismayed: not that they wait for a miracle to help them—the way God helps us is by showing us what we ought to do, and making us strong to do it; giving us wisdom, and taking from us the fear of man.

So Jacob was not dismayed when he saw Esau and his four hundred men coming towards him.

He saw what was best to do, and did it.

He gathered his large family all close together, putting the youngest, Joseph, and his mother Rachel, last, as the safest place, and went on before them to meet Esau. And God had softened Esau's heart towards him.

The hearts of all men are in His hands, to turn them whither-so-ever He will; and we should pray to Him to touch the hearts of those that hate us, that they may no longer be against us.

Jacob knew that his brother Esau was an ungodly man, and yet, in speaking to him, he was not ashamed to own how gracious God had been to him, and all that he had was His gift. (*Verses 5 and 11.*)

LESSON XXI.

JOSEPH SOLD BY HIS BRETHREN.

WHEN Jacob left Haran, Rachel had only one son, Joseph. She died not long after, when her second son Benjamin was born.

We hear nothing of Isaac's joy when Jacob came back : he was very likely too old to know much about it. He was 180 years old when he died, and Jacob and Esau buried him.

Most of Jacob's sons, when they were young men, seem to have been given to wicked ways; and Joseph, who was younger, and seems to have been always different, told his father what he heard of them.

This was one thing for which they hated him, also because their father loved him best, and because of his dreams.

Read Genesis, xxxvii.

Reuben seems to have been less hard-hearted than the others, and when they wanted to kill Joseph, he persuaded them to cast him into a pit, meaning to come afterwards and take him out. When Reuben left them they did it, and then sat down to eat bread, not caring for the fear and anguish of their poor young brother ; but many years after, when they were in grief and fear themselves, their consciences told them of it. (*Look at Genesis, xlii. 21.*)

While they were eating, some merchants came by on their way to Egypt; and they sold Joseph to them. They did not know that in doing this they were really helping to bring about what God had purposed, and had foretold to their great-grand-father.

God had told Abraham, nearly 200 years before, that his seed should be 400 years in bondage in a land that was not theirs. (*See Genesis, xv. 13.*)

This was the Land of Egypt, to which those to whom they had sold Joseph were now taking him. How all the rest came about we shall see as the Bible story goes on, and shows us its meaning more and more.

God did not forsake Joseph in his trouble. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted;" and we may be sure that God comforted the pious Joseph, and after the first bitter grief and dread had past, he would be

far happier than the cruel brothers who had sold him, and told their poor old father that an evil beast had devoured him, and thought no doubt they were pretty sure never to be found out.

Sometimes in real life, or in books, we meet with things that bring to our minds something in the Bible, and help us to understand it better.

I will tell you something true and sad, that has made me think of what those brothers of Joseph must have felt.

A gentleman's son displeased his friends by marrying, when he was almost a boy, a girl still younger. He loved her very much at first, but soon found she was not so clever as he was, and did not understand or care for the things in books that he talked to her about. This made him angry, and he often said very unkind things to her.

He had no religion to help him to overcome wrong feelings, and unhappily she had not either, but she loved him very much, and his unkindness made her very unhappy.

At last one day, after saying many wrong things, he went away from home without telling her where he was going, or for how long a time, and she soon began to think he would never come back.

In her great sorrow and trouble, if she had been like Joseph, and had prayed to God, we may be sure she would have found comfort.

but she grew more and more unhappy, and at last, wild with grief, she drowned herself.

When her husband heard of it, all the love for her he had once had came back: gladly would he have given all he had to bring her to life again, but it was too late then; and years after, he said that the memory of her look and voice was like a ghost haunting him. Wherever he was, whatever he was doing, it came back. He tried to forget her, and could not.

Perhaps those he lived with knew nothing of this. Truly God can punish men's sins in ways the world about them knows nothing of.

If he had truly repented and turned to God, he might have found pardon and peace at last, as Joseph's brethren did: but he did not believe in Jesus Christ; and ten years after, when he was out at sea in a boat, he was himself drowned.

Surely it should teach us to rule our spirits, when we see how bad passions get the better of men, and carry them on to do things which, when the passion is past, they cannot bear to remember.

Those brothers did not care at the time how unhappy they made Joseph; but when he was sold and gone, they knew not where, his look of anguish, and the way he had begged them not, and they would not hear, would often come back to them.

They would try to forget him, and would find they could not.

LESSON XXII.

TEMPTATION OF JOSEPH.

IN *Genesis*, xxxix. we learn how God had prospered Joseph.

A time of prosperity, that is, of things going on well with us in this world, is often a time of temptation too: but those whose hearts are filled with the love of God, and are always speaking with Him in prayer, are kept from the snares of the world, the flesh, and the devil; the Holy Spirit dwells within them, and the High God is their defence.

Whatever their tempter or temptation may be, they will say, like Joseph, "How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?" and will turn away, and will not hearken, and will fly from the temptation, lest through eye or ear a sinful thought or wish should enter.

"Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? even by ruling himself after Thy Word."

"O God, make clean our hearts within us: and take not Thy Holy Spirit from us."

When we leave off to watch and pray, we know not the danger we are in.

As God warned the wicked Cain, "Sin lieth at the door" of every heart of man; and when we are not living in prayer, it is as if we had unbarred the door to let Satan in; and if he has once taken possession there, we

cannot tell what trouble of mind and sorrow we may have to go through, before he shall be cast out at last, through the power of our gracious Saviour to cast out devils, and to heal all manner of disease of soul as well as body: if indeed the grace to repent at last is granted to those who have gone wilfully **into** sin, and go on, with their **eyes** fully open to the guilt of what they are doing.

God has said, "My Spirit shall not always strive with man:" we know that Esau found no place for repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears; and we are told of Judas Iscariot, it had been better for that man if he had never been born.

Joseph was falsely accused, and thrown into prison, while she who had tempted and accused him was believed, and not found out.

It might seem at first sight that everything was against him; but it is not always those who have to go through the greatest trials who are the most unhappy. The Lord was with Joseph, and His blessing rested on him wherever he went. (*See verses 21, 22, 23.*)

"It is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing than for evil doing." (*1 Peter, iii. 17.*)

Far happier was Joseph in his prison than that wicked woman in her husband's house, living as a great lady, and treated with honour she so ill deserved.

Some have riches and all this world can give as wages of their sin. The servant of God will learn to care less and less for such things as he finds how little they have to do with true happiness.

“Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.” (1 *Timothy*, vi. 8.)

We find, from some words Joseph spoke many years after this, that looking back to all the troubles he had passed through, he could see God’s hand in it all. So will it be with all of us who love God. Looking back through our past life, we shall see how things which we felt at the time to be our worst troubles, have proved to be for good to ourselves and others.

Read Proverbs, xvi. 7.

Read Psalm xxxvii. 7.

Read Psalms xxiii. and lxxiii.

LESSON XXIII.

JOSEPH IN PRISON.—PHARAOH’S DREAM.

THERE is little in the next two chapters to explain; but much may be thought and felt about them. May the Holy Spirit give us insight, teaching us all things, even the deep things of God. (1 *Corinthians*, ii. 10.)

Read Genesis, xl. to verse 8.

Joseph quickly saw by the looks of the chief butler and baker that they had something on

their minds, and spoke kindly to them. We shall always find that if a man loves God he will love his brother also: his heart will be tender and full of pity for others. The heart of the worldly man is hard; he is so taken up with the things belonging to himself, that he does not find out or understand what others are feeling, wishing, or suffering.

True Christians will "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ;" (*Galatians*, vi. 1.) not only helping one another, but feeling for one another; ready to rejoice with them that rejoice, and weep with them that weep. (*Romans*, xii. 15.)

Read verses 8 to 19.

The dreams that the two servants of Pharaoh had in prison were sent by God, whose will it was that Joseph should be able to interpret them. Joseph's words (*verse 8*.) show how strongly he felt that all power and wisdom comes from God.

If men praise anything we do, we should feel like Joseph that it is not in ourselves. As Saint Paul says, "I know that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

Read verses 20 to the end.

When the chief butler was restored to his office, and to the king's favour, he forgot to speak for Joseph!

Who could have thought it?

If we know what the heart of man is without God's grace, this will not surprise us.

If a man have not the Holy Spirit with him, we shall often find that what he ought most to feel, remember, and think of, is hid from him—it does not even strike him—he never gives it a thought.

The chief butler did not know the true God; but shall we, Christians, who may at all times have the Holy Spirit with us by asking in prayer, be like him?

“Ask, and ye shall receive.” (*Luke*, xi. 9 and 13.)

If any of us have forgotten past kindnesses as he did, may God grant that our fault may be brought to our remembrance as his was. It is well for us, though it may cause us pain and sorrow at the time, when our eyes are thus opened to see what was hid from us before—well indeed, if it is still not too late to repair our fault.

Perhaps Joseph had himself erred in trusting too much to the chief butler remembering him. (*Look at Psalm cxviii. verse 8; and Psalm cxlvi. verse 5.*)

Let us not trust too much in man, least of all in those who are living without prayer.

If they will not speak to the Heavenly Father, to whom they owe every blessing, can we be surprised that they forget their earthly friends, and make a bad return for their kindness and their love?

Read Genesis, xli.

Pharaoh's two dreams were so much alike

that he must have seen that both meant the same, even before they were interpreted.

This was perhaps that he might think of them the more, and be quite sure they were not common dreams. It was the same with the two dreams Joseph had had long before. (*See Genesis, xxxvii.*) We may find something of the same sort in other parts of the Bible, as in the visions of Daniel.

So Joseph rose to great honour, and was made a blessing to many, who but for him must have died in those years of famine.

This should remind us of that promised seed of Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth were to be blessed, even our Lord JESUS CHRIST, who has said, "He who cometh unto Me shall never hunger."

There are other things in the history of Joseph that may remind us of JESUS CHRIST, of whom Joseph was in many things a type or likeness.

LESSON XXIV.

JOSEPH MADE KNOWN TO HIS BRETHREN.

Read Genesis, xlii.

WHEN Joseph's dreams came true, and his brothers bowed themselves before him, not knowing who he was, he felt kindly towards

them, but spake roughly: he wanted to know what they had done with Benjamin. What they said about himself was not true; (*See the end of verse 13*—"is not," means is dead.) so how could he know that what they told him about Benjamin was true, and that they had not killed or sold him? so as a surety for their bringing him next time, he kept Simeon prisoner.

Old Jacob's words when they told him, show that he was broken down with all the troubles he had gone through, and that he had not strength to bear much more.

Read Genesis, xliii.

At last, as there seemed no help for it, Jacob let Benjamin go.

Joseph's heart was glad when he saw his own dearest youngest brother safe and well; but the time had not yet come to let them know who he was.

Read Genesis, xliv.

He wished to make one trial more, to see if they hated Benjamin as they had hated him; so he had his silver cup hid in Benjamin's sack, and sent his servant after them, who found the cup in Benjamin's sack.

What the servant said about his master divining (or foretelling things to come) by the help of that cup, was only to frighten them the more.

If they had hated Benjamin, or not cared what should become of him, they would have let the servant take him back, and would have

gone on home without him ; but when instead of that, they all came back with him in great trouble, and Judah told how it would bring down their father's gray hairs with sorrow to the grave, and begged to be put in prison himself instead of Benjamin, Joseph felt nothing but love and kindness to them all, and forgiveness for all they had done to him in past years.

Read Genesis, xlv.

No wonder Joseph's brethren were afraid when they heard who he was; but they soon found they had nothing to fear. How great the joy for them, but far more for Joseph!

How much is the joy of forgiving greater, as well as better, than the wicked joy of revenge; that is, of doing evil to others, because they have done wrong to us, which no true Christian will do.

If such a wicked feeling ever enters his heart, he will pray and fight against it, till the thought of all that Christ has done for him, will make him wish rather to suffer himself for the good of others than to do harm to any.

"From envy, hatred, and malice, Good Lord, deliver us."

So Joseph sent for his father, that he and his brothers might be settled near him; and so it was that God brought about that all the seed of Abraham together should be brought to that land in which He had said they should be in bondage 300 years.

They were not in bondage at first, but were treated with great honour, as long as Joseph lived, and the king that knew Joseph.

The next book of the Bible (*Exodus*) tells us of their bondage and deliverance.

We should be careful to remember that Jacob's name was changed to Israel, and the children of Israel, or Israelites, that we read so much of in the Bible, were the children of Jacob, or sprung from him, and were therefore of course also the seed of Abraham, Jacob's grandfather, to whom God had promised to give that Land of Canaan, in which they had dwelt from the time of Abraham till they went to Egypt.

Jacob, when he was dying, showed his belief in this promise by telling his sons they were not to bury him in Egypt, but to take his body to the Land of Canaan, where Abraham and Sarah, and Isaac and Rebekah, were buried.

Joseph also showed his belief in it when he was dying, by desiring that his body might not be buried in Egypt, but that they should keep his bones, and that when God brought them out of Egypt to the Promised Land, they should take his bones with them. (*See Hebrews*, xi. 22.)

So Joseph was not buried, but embalmed, that is, preserved in a way the people of Egypt knew, by which dead bodies have been kept for even hundreds of years.

LESSON XXV.

BONDAGE IN EGYPT.—BIRTH OF MOSES.

GOD had said to Abraham, "Know of a surety, thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them, and they shall afflict them 400 years; and also that nation whom they shall serve will I judge: and afterwards shall they come out with great substance."

The history of Joseph has shown us how the seed of Abraham first came to be a stranger in a land that was not theirs—the land of Egypt. It is from the second book of the Bible (*Exodus*) we learn how they came to serve the Egyptians, and to be afflicted, or cruelly ill-used, by them; and how God judged the Egyptians, and brought out his chosen people (the children of Israel, as they were now called) by a great deliverance out of that land.

Joseph, by the wisdom God had given him, had done a great deal for the King of Egypt, by keeping his people alive through the years of famine; and as long as Joseph and that king Pharaoh lived, all the family of Jacob or Israel were treated with great favour, and much made of in Egypt; but after Joseph and his brethren, and the king who had been their friend, were

all dead, things began to be very different for those that came after them.

Jacob's twelve sons had many children and grand-children, and were fast becoming a very numerous people; so that another promise of God to Abraham was already coming to pass, that his seed should be as the stars of heaven and the sand of the sea shore for multitude. (*See Genesis*, xv. 5; and xxii. 17.) But their growing numbers made the Egyptians and the new King Pharaoh jealous of them, and think that they would join with their enemies against them.

Read Exodus, i.

Not all that Pharaoh could do could hinder the purposes of God. God had promised Abraham that his seed, or family, should become a great nation, as numberless as the stars in the sky and the sand on the sea shore; and Pharaoh could not hinder this.

The king's command was not obeyed; the young children of Israel were not killed at their birth, as he had ordered, and he gave a fresh order that all the male children were to be drowned.

Men order and plan with no thought whether God will have it so or not; then He shows to all who have the eye of faith to see the hidden things, that man can do nothing without God, for if it does not suit His purposes that their wicked plans should go on, they come to nothing.

Among those children that Pharaoh commanded should be drowned, one was to be born who should not only grow to manhood, but should be employed by God to free them all from the wicked king's cruel power.

This ought to remind us of another wicked king, who many hundreds of years after this, commanded many children to be killed, that he might kill One among them whom God had said was to be a King; but Herod could not kill the Holy Child who was born "King of the Jews," any more than Pharaoh could hinder that one should be born of the Hebrews to lead Israel out of Egypt and Egyptian bondage.

Hebrews is another name for the seed of Abraham, or Israelites. In the time of our Lord Jesus Christ they were called Jews, as they are still. The Epistle to the Hebrews was written to the Jews who were converted to Christianity, that is, who, believing the Gospel that had been preached to them, were baptized.

Read Exodus, ii.

This chapter tells of the birth of Moses, who was chosen of God to be the leader and deliverer of His people, and how it came to pass by the Providence of God that he was brought up in Pharaoh's palace, and so became learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians; but when he became a man, he chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; setting us an

example of faith. (*See Hebrews*, xi. 24 to 27.) But the people of Israel refused to have Moses for their ruler and judge, even as, a long time after, they refused Christ, of whom Moses himself foretold, saying, "A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me." (*See Acts*, vii. 22 to 37.)

In many things Moses was like Christ. Such likenesses are called types. The better we understand the Bible, the more we shall see in how many ways the Old Testament fore-shows the New, by sacrifices, types, prophecies ; so that, while even a young child may understand a great deal of the Bible—indeed, as much as is needful for him—there is enough also to employ all the wisdom and learning of the wisest of mankind, whose wisdom after all is but foolishness, unless it leads them to love God in their hearts, and obey Him in their lives.

LESSON XXVI.

CALL OF MOSES.

Read Exodus, ii. verses 11 to the end.

God had purposed that Moses should be the deliverer of His people, and had put into his heart a strong desire to be so ; but Moses

had yet to learn that it was only by God's guidance he could have strength or wisdom for so great a work.

He thought to take the part of his ill-used and suffering kinsmen by the strength of his own arm, and so brought himself into great trouble : he slew an Egyptian, and had to fly from the country for fear of Pharaoh's anger, and for forty years, he who had been brought up in a king's palace, lived the life of a shepherd in the wilderness.

We have seen that by the ordering of God's Providence, Moses was brought up by his own mother, so that even in the palace of the heathen king, he had learnt to know the God of Israel, while the learning of the Egyptians had also given him much of the wisdom he would afterwards need as the ruler of God's people; but he had much more yet to learn, in that lonely life apart from men, by the teaching of the Holy Spirit, instructing and guiding him in ways that he understood not then, till he should be fitted for the great work for which God intended him.

All this time the unhappy Israelites were groaning under the bondage of their cruel masters; but God saw it all, and heard and pitied them. He is always on the side of those who are unjustly used by any higher and stronger, or of more power, than themselves. (*See Ecclesiastes*, v. 8. *Psalms* ix. 18; and *Psalms* x. 17, 18.)

At last the time came, and God spake to Moses.

• *Read Exodus, iii. to verse 6.*

While Moses was wondering at the strange sight, the bush that went on burning was not destroyed, the Voice of God was heard, and told him to put off his shoes from off his feet, for the place where he stood was holy ground. In those eastern lands men uncover the feet, as a mark of great honour and respect, the same as here they uncover the head. Wherever we go to meet God, whether to church with other men, or alone in prayer, we should behave with reverence and godly fear, and feel that God's Presence makes it holy ground.

Read verses 7 to 10.

It is often in our worst times of trouble that deliverance is very near, though we cannot see what is to help us, or that there can be any help. If we could only put our whole trust in God, what trouble of mind and fear it would often save us!

Read verses 11 to the end.

Moses was very wrong in speaking as he did. (*Verse 11.*) Whatever we feel that God calls on us to do, we should not fear to undertake; for if we pray to Him, and put our trust in Him, He will give us all the help we need. "When I am weak, then am I strong." (*2 Corinthians, xii. 9, 10.*)

We find in *verse 12* that God said, "When thou hast brought forth the people out of

Egypt, ye shall serve God upon this mountain." This Mount Horeb, where Moses then was, was part of the same mountain that we read of afterwards as Mount Sinai, where the Law was given to Moses.

The name which the Lord God chose to be called by, I AM THAT I AM, means, "I shall always be the same as I am now."

In the last verse of the chapter, "borrow" means ask for. They were to ask for these costly things, to be not *lent*, but *given*; and we find at last that the Egyptians were glad to give all they asked for, to be rid of them out of the land; but the Israelites had much to go through, and the Egyptians many punishments or plagues to suffer, before these things were brought about, which the wonderful Providence of the All-seeing God had ordered long before.

LESSON XXVII.

MOSES SENT TO PHARAOH AND TO ISRAEL.

Read Exodus, iv. to verse 9.

WE find that God gave Moses power to work miracles, without which it was not to be supposed that either the Israelites or Pharaoh would believe that he had been sent by God.

Read verses 10 to 17.

(Eloquent means able to speak well.) Moses was still fearful: God had promised to be with him, (*see verses 11 and 12 of the chapter before.*) so he need not have feared.

We cannot trust too little in ourselves, or too much in God. Of ourselves we can do nothing: with God's help we can do everything. (*Philippians*, iv. 13.)

God was displeased with Moses, but still had pity on his weakness, for "He knoweth whereof we are made, He remembereth we are but dust;" and He told Moses he might take Aaron his brother with him, who could speak well.

Read verses 18 to 23.

God was angry with Moses for not having circumcised his son, which all the seed of Abraham were so strictly commanded to do. (*See Genesis*, xvii. 9 to 14.)

It is well when God's anger and the fear of Him makes us do the right thing that He has commanded.

God had commanded Abraham, saying, "Every man-child among you shall be circumcised The uncircumcised man-child shall be cut off from his people—he hath broken My covenant."

In like manner it is commanded to Christians that all shall be baptized. "Go ye into all the world," (said our Lord to His Apostles,) "and preach the Gospel to every

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et us not then let go our hope and
call to mind His gracious promises.
vi. 9; and 1 *Corinthians*, xv. 58.)
Exodus, vi. to verse 8.

ward the cry of Moses, and gave him
and comfort, telling him how His
and should be upon Pharaoh, who,
he might rise against it, would not
to shake off or resist it, and would
not only let the people go, but drive
out.

al also reminded Moses of all His past
uses, from the time of Abraham, which
d not be broken.

So God deals with all who seek Him in
of need. His Holy Spirit brings to their
and His gracious promises to all who believe
Christ, and put their trust in Him. (*St.*
John, xiv. 26.)

Read verse

When M

aelites of these

promises of deliverance, they had not the heart to listen, their spirits were bowed down and broken. God did not chide them for it; they were sorely tried, and He knows that our flesh is weak.

Read verses 28 to the end.

God then told Moses to go again to Pharaoh, but the heart of Moses failed him, and he was afraid to go.

Read Exodus, vii. to verse 7.

God did not rebuke Moses either for his want of faith, but told him He had made Pharaoh to look on him as a god, or as one with whom was the wisdom and power of God; and reminded him that he might take Aaron his brother with him—that though Pharaoh's heart was hardened, and he would not hear, yet at last, the children of Israel should be brought forth out of the Land of Egypt. "Then Moses and Aaron did as the Lord commanded them, so did they."

LESSON XXVIII.

THE FOUR FIRST PLAGUES.

Read Exodus, vii. verses 8 to 13.

THE magicians were men who did wonderful things, which others could not understand how they were able to do; but we know from what

we have read before, that this wonderful miracle of turning the rods into serpents was done by God. The people of Egypt worshipped serpents or snakes, and other creeping things, as gods; and the Lord caused the rods of the magicians to become serpents, as well as Aaron's rod, as a sign that as Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods, so would the Lord destroy the idols of Egypt.

But Pharaoh need not have doubted which was right—Moses and Aaron, who declared they were sent by God, or the magicians who wished to make Pharaoh think it was not so, and that Moses and Aaron had no more power really than they had themselves; for when Aaron's rod devoured the others, it might have shown him plainly that God was on the side of Moses; but men like Pharaoh shut the eyes of their understanding to things they do not wish to see, and by only looking at part of the truth, often find reasons, which at first might seem good ones, for not believing.

In 2 *Timothy*, iii. 8, we are told the names of those magicians, and what their crime was: they withstood Moses, and resisted the truth, as such men always do, "men of corrupt minds and reprobate concerning the truth;" that is, unbelievers. We also learn from this chapter of the Epistle to Timothy, what sort of people they are who are led away by such men, weak and foolish people, "ever learning,

but never able to come to a knowledge of the truth;" that is, people who seem to be always seeking wisdom, but never find it, because instead of seeking the whole truth from God, they listen to the half truths that unbelievers tell them. Such half truths are the worst sort of lies: such was that lie that Satan told to Eve, "Your eyes shall be opened;" for he did not tell her that this opening of their eyes would be their misery and ruin.

We have seen that Pharaoh wanted an excuse for not believing, and found it. His heart was hardened, and now the first of those terrible plagues was sent.

Read verses 14 to the end.

It was the will of God that the waters should be turned to blood, so the magicians were able to do the same; but if Pharaoh had told them to cure the waters, they would not have been able to do it. He would not do that, for he would not believe till he was forced. While we are determined not to believe, we never shall.

At the end of seven days the first plague was removed, and Moses was sent again to Pharaoh; but it was of no use, so the second plague was sent.

Read Exodus, viii. to verse 15.

Again the magicians were allowed to do the same; but Pharaoh knew it would be of no use to ask them to take away the frogs; he called for Moses and Aaron to entreat the

Lord, and promised to do as He had commanded ; but this was no true repentance, and when the prayer of Moses was heard, and the plague was removed, the heart of Pharaoh was hardened, and he would not do as he had said.

How many a wicked man will promise to mend his ways when they have brought him into trouble, but, like Pharaoh, return to them again as soon as the Lord's chastening Hand is taken off.

And now the plague of lice was sent.

Read verses 16 to 20.

This time the magicians could not do the same, and even they said to Pharaoh, "This is the finger of God." But his heart was hardened still.

Read verses 20 to 24.

The next plague, that of flies, was sent on the Egyptians only. In the land of Goshen, where the children of Israel were, there were no flies. This showed still more plainly that it was the Lord's doing; and again Pharaoh called for Moses and Aaron.

Read verses 25 to the end.

This time he thought, as it were, to make a bargain with the Lord God, by doing a *part* of what He had commanded: He would let the people sacrifice *in the land*; but would not let them go.

So sinners sometimes think to escape the anger of God, by giving up a *part* of their

sins ; but Moses showed Pharaoh that this would not do.

A-bom-i-na-tion (*verse 26.*) means something hateful, and is a word often used in the Bible for idols. (The Egyptians worshipped as gods those animals that the Israelites would have to offer in sacrifice.)

Then Pharaoh gave way a little more ; (*verse 28.*) but this would not do either.

Unless we give up our own will wholly to the will of God, He will not accept of us.

LESSON XXIX.

FIVE MORE PLAGUES.

Read Exodus, ix.

IN this chapter we read of three more plagues ; first a dreadful murrain, or deadly distemper among the cattle ; then boils upon man and beast, and even on the magicians, showing that they had no real power over the plagues God had sent.

Then was sent a very grievous hail, not only destroying the crops, but slaying men and animals who were exposed to it.

From verses 19, 20, 21, we may learn how those who really believe the word of the Lord show their faith by their deeds.

Pharaoh now owned himself a sinner; but this was not enough, for his stubborn will was unbroken still.

In *chapter ix. 15, and x. 2*, we learn that God's judgments must not be forgotten when they are passed, but should make us think of His mighty power, and speak of it, to keep up the remembrance of it among men.

Read Exodus, x.

When God threatened to send locusts, Pharaoh's own servants turned against him, because he would not let the people go; so he said they might go, but they must leave their children and their flocks and herds behind them; and when he found that would not do, he drove out Moses and Aaron from his presence in anger; but when the locusts came, and were devouring all that was left, he sent for them again to intreat their prayers. No sooner, however, was the prayer of Moses heard, and the locusts all swept into the sea, than Pharaoh's heart was hardened again.

Then followed the plague of darkness, and once more Pharaoh seemed to be giving way; he said they might go, and their children, but they must leave their cattle: he would do no more than he could possibly help.

It is not in this way that God will be obeyed: but the time was drawing near when Pharaoh would be no longer able to withstand the mighty power of God.

When he found that Moses would not ¹

satisfied unless he yielded entirely, he was so angry, he said he would see his face no more; and Moses answered that it should be as he had said. Moses did not, however, leave the presence of Pharaoh immediately: he had a last message to give from the Lord, more terrible than any before, which must have made Pharaoh tremble, and his heart sink within him.

Read Exodus, xi. to verse 3.

These verses tell us of things God had said to Moses before he went to Pharaoh that last time, and other things about the Egyptians, Moses and Pharaoh.

Read verses 4 to the end.

These verses tell us of what passed between Moses and Pharaoh, that time of their last meeting face to face.

In all the other plagues the lives of the Egyptians had been spared, but now the first-born in every house was to be struck dead.

LESSON XXX.

THE PASSOVER.

Read Exodus, xii.

THIS chapter tells us how the Passover, that great yearly feast of the Jews, began.

By the command of God the Israelites were

to kill a lamb in every house, and mark with its blood the door-posts of their houses, that the destroying angel that was sent to slay the first-born of the Egyptians, might pass over those houses that were marked by the blood of the lamb.

But the Feast of the Passover meant more than that. It was, (as indeed all the Jewish sacrifices were,) a type or figure of the death of Christ.

The wrath of God came on all who were not saved by the blood of the lamb. That lamb was therefore a likeness of Christ.

All God's chosen people would be very careful to make the mark of the blood of the lamb very plain on their houses, that there might be no doubt of their claim to His promise that such should be saved from destruction. So will all who believe in Christ be very careful to make their calling and election sure, to make no doubt that they belong to Him, by having the mark of the true believer, namely, obedience to His commands.

The better we understand what this chapter tells us of the feast of the Passover, the more we shall see how every part of it was a type, (a sort of acted prophecy,) of the death of Christ.

In verse 17 we are told that at the Feast of the Passover they were to eat unleavened bread. This also was a sign. Malice and wickedness works in men's hearts as a bad

heaven, which must not be in the believer. (*See 1 Corinthians*, v. 6, 7, 8.)

In verse 46 we are told that not a bone of the lamb was to be broken; and from *John*, xix. 36, we learn that this was true of Jesus Christ, and spake of Him.

The Jews, who were to keep this feast every year, could not clearly understand all it was to fore-show, but while they had any belief in what God had done for them, and any thankfulness for past and present deliverances, they could not neglect it.

We are also told how we are to keep the death of Christ in remembrance: the command is as plain to us as it was to the Jews, and its meaning is much plainer. Do we not, then, indeed show ourselves unbelieving and unthankful, when we refuse to do as He has commanded in remembrance of Him?

When Jesus Christ took the last Passover with His disciples, He changed it into the Lord's Supper. He gave them bread and wine, as a sign of His body and blood being given for them, and said, "This do in remembrance of Me."

So Christians are as much bound to keep the Lord's Supper as the Israelites were to keep the Passover; and whatever reasons or excuses they may think they have for neglecting it, those are not true Christians who refuse to obey their Saviour's dying command that they

should thus take bread and wine together in remembrance of Him.

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast; not with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” (1 *Corinthians*, v. 7.)

LESSON XXXI.

THE TENTH PLAGUE.—ISRAEL GOES OUT OF EGYPT.

Read Exodus, xii. verses 29 to 36.

God kept back the greatest and worst punishment of the Egyptians to the last.

All God's judgments are sent in warning. It is well when men take warning, and thus are saved from worse condemnation.

God fore-knew how it would be, and had foretold it to Abraham. (*Look at Genesis*, xv. 13, 14.) God had also told the same to Moses, when He first spoke to him at the burning bush. (*Exodus*, iii. 19, 20.)

You see it was by the command of God that the Israelites borrowed (or asked for) the precious things of the Egyptians. God had also told Moses that Pharaoh would at last drive them out of the land.

It was no wonder that his people too urged them to be gone; for now that the lives of their first-born had been taken, they could not feel that their own lives were safe.

Read Exodus, xiii. to verse 16.

The first-born of the Israelites were to be sanctified, or set apart to God, and accounted as His. This would remind them that their first-born had been saved by the blood of the lamb, and so did indeed belong to Him who had saved them, and should remind *us* how *we* are saved by the blood of Christ, and so belong to Him. (*See 1 Corinthians, vi. 19, 20; and 1 Peter, i. 18, 19, and 2 Corinthians, v. 15.*)

When they kept the Passover every year, it was to remind them of that first Passover, when God brought them out of Egypt.

The unleavened bread was to remind them how, when they were thrust out of Egypt in haste, they had to bake their bread before it was leavened.

Read verses 17, 18.

These verses tell us the reason God gave to Moses why the children of Israel were not to go the shortest way to the Promised Land.

We must not forget this was the land God had promised Abraham his seed should possess. It was also called Canaan, because the heathen people who then had it were sprung from Canaan, the grandson of Noah, and son of Ham, who was cursed for dishonouring his father. (*Genesis, ix. 25.*)

As the blessing of God had gone down from father to son in the family of Abraham, so had the curse in the family of Canaan; and these were the people that the Israelites or seed of Abraham were to destroy, and take possession of their land; but the time for that had not yet come, and as we shall see further on, their own sinfulness and rebellion were the cause of its being delayed forty years.

Read verse 19.

This shows us that what Joseph made his brethren promise when he was dying was not forgotten. (*See the three last verses of the last chapter of Genesis.*)

The bones of Joseph kept all those years might have reminded the Israelites of those promises of God, in which Joseph, by asking this, had shown such firm faith.

Read verses 20, 21, 22.

The last three verses tell us how they began their journey out of Egypt, and how God led them the way they should go. When the darkness of night came on, so that they could not see the wonderful cloud that had led them by day, it became bright like fire before them.

It was not
then to be
their first-born
for they were
Israel's

The first-born
sought, or set
as *is*. This
first-born had
been and so
had saved them.
not saved by the
in *Israel*. See 1
1 *Exod.* 11, 12, 13.

When they knew
was to remind
when God brought

The unleavened
how, when they were
haste, they had to
was leavened.

Read verses 17, 18
These verses tell
to Moses why the
to *Israel*

nd pray as well as strive; neither will
e.

"You pray for strength, and that is right,
But mind that it is strength to fight."

always sure to be best to go the way
od would have us go, even though it
full of danger. God can make a way
as He did for them, through the midst
waters. (*See Isaiah, xliii. 2; and 1 Co-*
rs, x. 13.)

this part of the Bible may teach us much
s dealings with men; and we are told,
e things are written for our learning."
ns, xv. 4.)

verses 16 to the end.

how wonderfully God ordered every-
to help the Israelites, and trouble their
es, and then made a way for His people
gh the midst of the waters, which swal-
up Pharaoh and his army.

the pillar of fire which gave light to the
lites, was a dark cloud to the Egyptians,
would fill their soul with dread. Trouble
ed them, they could not get on. Even
ore the wall of waters came back on them,
y must have felt that death was before them,
it it was too late to escape then.

Such
ink of
as har
s Pha

nd horror, terrible to
the dying sinner, who
against warnings, even

"He that, being often reprov'd, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy." (*Proverbs*, xxix. 1.)

"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

LESSON XXXIII.

THE MURMURINGS OF ISRAEL.

Exodus, xv. to verse 22, is the song of praise, in which Moses thanked the Lord for His people's deliverance at the Red Sea.

When our hearts are very full of thankful joy, it seems as if common speaking could not praise God enough. Those who through God's mercy in Christ have been delivered from worse bondage than that of Egypt, may well feel this, and yet may not be able to make a song of thanksgiving and praise; but in the Bible, most of all in the Psalms, we may find words ready for us, in which we may pour out our whole heart to God, as the angels do in Heaven, till it might almost seem to us we were already there; but troubles and temptations soon come again, to remind us that our rest is not here, and that if we fail of the grace of God we shall never reach it. So it was with the Israelites, who had joined with Moses and his sister in their song of praise.

Read verses 22 to the end.

Those who had lately been singing praises to God, were now murmuring; and yet they knew that all was ordered by the same God.

They murmured against Moses.

We should not be so apt to find fault with others, when anything goes wrong, if we always bore in mind that it is the Lord's doing, even when He makes use of our fellow-creatures to bring it about; and that it is to *prove* us, to try whether we will say in our hearts, "Thy will be done," and be ready to do and bear all that God would have us, like loving children of our Heavenly Father, or set ourselves against it.

If they had been thankful to God that they had water at all, and had borne with its bitterness patiently, till it was His will that they should come to good water, how much better it would have been than murmuring!

In their journeying after this, they came to a place where there was good water, which they would soon have reached, even if the bitter water had not been sweetened for them. (*See the last verse of the chapter.*)

We shall all meet with bitter things in our journey through life; but let us not murmur like the Israelites, but cry to God as Moses did. He will sweeten what is bitter, if we cry to Him.

This world is the wilderness, through which we are journeying to the Heavenly Canaan;

but we are told of the Israelites that "with many of them God was not well pleased, and they were overthrown in the wilderness." Let us take warning from their example, lest our sentence should ever be like theirs.

"The Lord sware in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest."

LESSON XXXIV.

MANNA.

Read Exodus, xvi. to verse 5.

God is very merciful, long-suffering, and patient. The Israelites murmured again, yet He did not withhold from them the blessings they so ill deserved. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." (*Matthew*, v. 45.) He gave them bread from Heaven to eat, even while He rebuked their sinful murmurings.

Read verses 6 to 15.

The glory of the Lord appearing in the cloud was to teach them the fear of Him; and then, that they might feel how unthankful they were, He gave them yet more.

Read verses 16 to 18.

Some were able to gather more manna than others, but they all shared alike: it was put together and weighed, and equally divided.

We are shown in the New Testament that we are to learn from this, that those who have more than they need should give to those who have less.

Read verses 19 to the end.

This foolish and rebellious people, for all that the Lord God had done so much for them, still would not submit themselves to His will, but were always turning back after their own ways. How plain was the command that they should observe the Sabbath! and everything ordered to make it easy for them to do so, yet some of them would not.

When we see men wilfully breaking the Commandments of God, it might seem that they could not know what they were doing; but the wilful sinner is as one who neither sees nor hears.

The Lord has done yet more for us, yet how often do we disobey Him! and some dishonour the Sabbath, even as they did.

In the Gospel Jesus Christ has taught us that He is the true Bread from Heaven, of which manna was the sign.

As the lamb of the Passover fore-showed the death of Christ, so did the manna in the wilderness fore-show the life bestowed through Him. "The Bread of God is He that cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world." Jesus says, "I am the bread of life. He that eateth of this bread shall live for ever. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drink

My blood, hath eternal life. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life."

May we so read the Gospel that we may hear in it His gracious voice, witness His sufferings, feel that He is ever with us.

So our souls will be nourished by Him, as our bodies are by the bread of this life. *Read St. John, vi. verses 27 to 58.*

LESSON XXXV.

ISRAEL'S FIRST BATTLE.

Read Exodus, xvii., verses 1 to 7.

AGAIN did Israel seem to have forgotten all God's miracles of love.

Because the Lord was pleased to leave them a little while without water, they would not believe but that the God who had done so much for them, would leave them to die of thirst. God was proving them, to see if they would submit to His will in patient trust, and that they might learn to do so; but they did not understand this, and so they murmured.

Are we not all too much like them, if we murmur and complain when God sees fit to try us with any trouble? instead of saying in our hearts, "Thy will be done," firmly trusting that we are safe in His hands, and that He

will deliver us in His own good time, and so having the true peace that the world cannot give, and learning the lesson of holiness that He would teach us in all His dealings with us.

The unthankful murmurings of the Israelites only showed forth yet more the long-suffering, patience, and loving-kindness of the Lord. (*See the last five verses of Psalm cv.*)

Read verses 8 to the end.

No sooner had the Israelites come out of Egypt, and passed safely through the Red Sea, than they found new enemies to conquer.

So will he who has already taken the road to Heaven, still have the world, the flesh, and the devil, to fight against. He must overcome them as the Israelites overcame their enemies, by striving for themselves, and by looking to God for strength by prayer.

As Moses held up his rod, by which God had given him power to work so many miracles, so must we hold up the Cross of Christ; that is, call to mind in prayer that it is through this we shall conquer. Otherwise God will not hear us, for it is for Christ's sake alone we can ever hope to be counted as His children.

You see it was not the sword of Joshua, but the prayer of Moses, that conquered; for when Moses ceased to lift up his hands to Heaven, their enemies got uppermost.

As Aaron and Hur stayed up his hands, so should Christian friends help and pray with one another.

The battle lasted all day, but Israel conquered at last. So our soul's battle will be life-long, but at last we shall conquer.

(*Look at 2 Timothy*, iv. 6, 7, 8; *and 1 Corinthians*, xv. 55, 56, 57.)

We must fight the good fight, striving against our sins, looking to God for strength, knowing that we have a better in-ter-ces-sor (that is, one to speak or plead for us) than Moses was for Israel.

LESSON XXXVI.

THE GIVING OF THE LAW.

Exodus xviii. tells us of what must have been a joyful day for Moses, when his father-in-law, Jethro, came to see him, bringing his wife and his two sons.

Moses, like many who have great zeal for God, had been working beyond his strength; the advice of Jethro was very wise, and Moses did well to follow it.

The time had now almost come for the great event of the Old Testament—the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai.

Read Exodus, xix.

Moses was commanded to speak to the people, to prepare them for what was to follow, that they might feel more strongly how great

and holy was the God with whom they had to do. (*Look also at Exodus, xxxiv. 6, 7, 8.*)

Let us take a lesson from this, and never draw near to God for prayer, or to hear His Holy Word, with light or foolish thoughts in our hearts.

All was now ready, and God spake with His own voice. How awful it must have been!

Read Exodus, xx.

God spake the Ten Commandments, which He afterwards wrote on two tables of stone, and gave to Moses. On the first table were those four Commandments which teach us our duty to God; on the second table were the six Commandments which teach us our duty to our neighbour. In this way we see them now written up, on two tablets, in churches.

There are some parts of the Law God gave to Moses which are not binding on all the world, through all times. Such are those in verses 24, 25, and all the laws about the tabernacle, priests and sacrifices, which were suitable for that time, but are not needed now; such laws too as that about Hebrew servants in the next chapter, and many others.

But the Ten Commandments are binding on all to obey. They have to do with what is unchangeably right and wrong for all men, in all times.

What has to do with right and wrong is called *moral*. So the Ten Commandments are sometimes called the "Moral Law."

What has to do with sacrifices, and different ways of worship, is called ce-re-mo-ni-al. So the laws about them are sometimes called the "Ceremonial Law."

Can any of us rightly obey the Moral Law? that is, do *all* that we may learn from the Ten Commandments is our duty to do. No, we cannot. Then what is its use?

To show us that we are guilty sinners in God's sight, that we may come thankfully to Him who bore the curse of the law for us, for pardon and salvation.

LESSON XXXVII.

SACRIFICES.

THE chapters of Exodus that follow the giving of the Law on Mount Sinai, speak mostly of the ceremonial law of sacrifices, and such other laws as were only for the Jews; but along with these, there are some that belong more to the moral law of right and wrong, that is binding on us all, such as in chapter xxiii. 2. where we are warned not to follow a multitude to do evil.

This verse, and verses 3, 6, 7, 8 of the same chapter, teach us that a judge must be strictly just to all, and favour neither the poor (*verse 6.*) nor the rich. (*verse 8.*)

One of the greatest blessings of England is the justice of our good laws; not like some countries, where there is nothing to hinder bad men, when they get power, oppressing and ill using those who cannot stand up for themselves. Let us be thankful for the blessings of this our native land, and pray for our rulers, as we are told to do in 1 Timothy, ii. 2, that we may have good and peaceable times, in which we may lead a quiet life in all godliness and honesty.

Verse 9 of this same chapter of Exodus shows us that our own past troubles ought to make us feel for others.

In *verses* 22 and 23, we find that God promised the Israelites that if they would obey His voice, He would drive away their enemies, help them in all their undertakings, and give them full possession of the Promised Land. Just so will Christ do for us, if we are his faithful soldiers and servants. He will help us against our souls' enemies, the world, the flesh, and the devil, will bless us in all we do, and bring us at last to our promised land in Heaven.

Read Exodus xxiv.

This chapter speaks of a covenant between God and men.

A sacrifice was slain, as was usual in making any covenant or agreement.

It was as if they had said, "If I do not keep this covenant, may I be slain in-like

manner." So all fell under the curse of the Law, that is, the sentence of death for disobedience; for none could obey God as they ought. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God"—but Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law. (*Galatians* iii. 10 to 14.)

The covenant of the *New Testament*—that of grace, through faith in Christ—speaks to man as to a sinner who has broken the *Old* covenant of works, and has therefore no hope from that, and offers him altogether new terms of salvation, (*Hebrews*, viii. 6 to 12.) all founded on mercy, not merit; Christ's works and sufferings, not man's works. (*Hebrews*, viii. 12.) The Israel spoken of in verse 10, means the Church, or great body of Christians; they are now God's people, as Israel was of old, and are spoken of in the New Testament as "the Israel of God."

When the Old Covenant was given, it was only a few who were allowed to draw near, and speak with God on His holy mountain.

By the better Covenant we now have, *all* may draw near to God in prayer.

"When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers."

LESSON XXXVIII.

TYPES.

IN *Exodus*, xxv. xxvi. and xxvii. we are told of the making of the Tabernacle, or tent, that was the place of worship of the Israelites while they were wandering in the wilderness, and afterwards in the Promised Land, till the Temple at Jerusalem was built.

We are told how every part of the Tabernacle was made, for it was all meant as a type or likeness of the Church of God, or company of believers. (*Psalms* xv. 1. *Hebrews* viii. 2. *Revelation*, xxi. 3.)

The Tabernacle was divided into two parts, by a veil or curtain between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies. (*Exodus*, xxvi. 31 to 37.)

The Holy Place was a likeness of the Church on earth. Here was the altar of incense, or odours, which were burnt, and had a sweet smelling smoke. (*Exodus*, xxx. 1.)

This was a type of prayer, which rises like that sweet smoke to Heaven.

The Holy of Holies, or Sanctuary, was a likeness of Heaven ; here was the Ark of the Covenant, in which was kept the Ten Commandments, written on two tables of stone, and on the top of it the Mercy Seat. This w

to signify that Jesus Christ, through whom we obtain mercy, fulfilled the Law, and now appears in Heaven for us, pleading for us before the throne of God.

The Candlestick (*Exodus*, xxv. 31 to 36.) was a likeness of the Ministry of the Gospel. See *Matthew*, v. 14 to 16.

The table of shew-bread—*Exodus*, xxv. 23 to 30—should remind us of Jesus Christ being the Bread of Life.

Outside the entrance was the altar of Burnt Offering or Sacrifice, to show that we can only draw near to God, and become members of His true Church, by the sacrifice of the death of Christ.

The blessings we enjoy are greater than those of Israel. God has given us the substance of those things of which they had only the shadows.

Read *Hebrews*, ix.

Exodus, xxviii. 1, 2, speaks of the High Priest.

As all the tabernacle was types or signs, so was the High Priest also a type of Christ.

The Epistle to the Hebrews helps us to understand this, particularly *Hebrews*, v. 4, 5; iii. 1; ii. 17; vii. 26, 27, 28; ix. 25, 27, 28.

As more is given and made known to us than was to Israel of old, so will God look for more from us. As all that God had done for them could not save from destruction those who were disobedient, so will it be

with us, as Saint Paul teaches us in 1 *Corinthians*, x.

Saint Paul warns the Corinthians that as the Jews of old were no better for their privileges, so shall not we be for ours, if we are like them unfaithful and disobedient.

In verses 1 and 2 we are shown that the pillar of cloud that led them, and their passage over the Red Sea, were to them what Baptism is to us, an outward sign and token of God's mercy and favour.

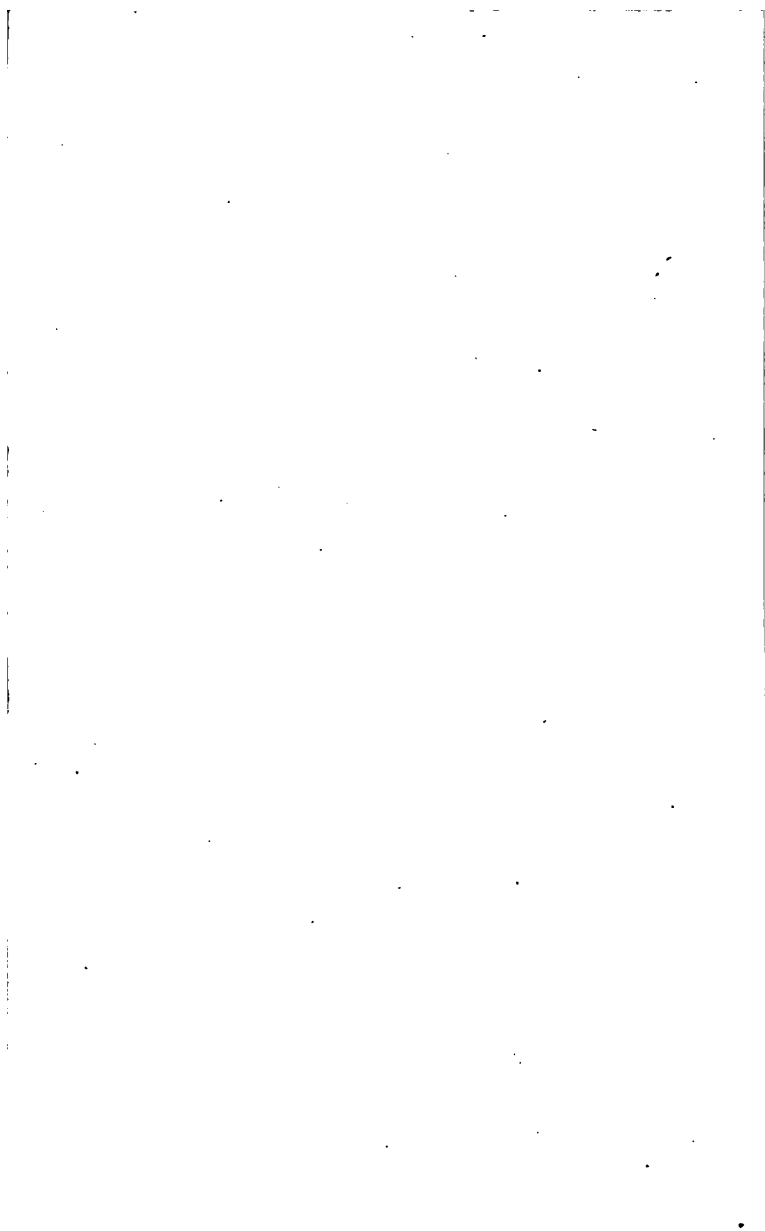
Verse 3 shows that as the true bread of life is given to us, so was the bread from Heaven (manna) given to them.

Verse 4, shows that as the water of life, which is the Holy Spirit, is given to us, so did God show mercy and favour to the Israelites by making water flow for them from the hard rock. "That rock was Christ."

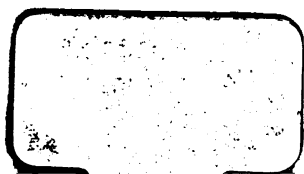
He who watches over his people now, watched over His people then. He was with His own, though they knew Him not. Under the Law, as under the Gospel, He had a flock that heard His voice and followed Him.

Verses 10 and 11 tell us these things happened to them for examples for us.

To understand verse 7, read Colossians, iii. 7.







The first of these is the fact that the
government has been unable to
maintain a consistent policy
towards the press. In the past,
it has at times been friendly
and at times hostile. This has
led to a lack of confidence
among the public and the
press alike. The second is the
fact that the government has
not been able to establish a
clear and consistent policy
towards the press. In the past,
it has at times been friendly
and at times hostile. This has
led to a lack of confidence
among the public and the
press alike. The third is the
fact that the government has
not been able to establish a
clear and consistent policy
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The fourth is the fact that the
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to establish a clear and
consistent policy towards the
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times been friendly and at
times hostile. This has led to
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the public and the press
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that the government has not
been able to establish a clear
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